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The Sunday-School as an Evangelistic Agency.

At the recent anniversary of our Sunday-school Union in St. Louis a conference was held on Sunday-school work. The conference was conducted by Dr. Gillet, and we are indebted to him for the following summary of the proceedings.

The subject discussed was "The Sunday-school as an Evangelistic Agency."

Dr. Gillet opened the conference with a few remarks, in which he raised the question whether the results we were obtaining in conversions and accessions to the Church through the medium of the Sunday-school were at all commensurate with the force employed and the opportunities presented. Brief addresses on the various phases of the question were made by Bishop Bowman, Dr. Freeman, Dr. Hurlbut, Dr. Haggerty, Dr. Liebhart, Dr. Cox, Dr. King, Mr. F. G. Niedringhaus, and others. The following points were made:

1. The purpose of the Sunday-school is not only to convert, but to secure the salvation of the pupil through proper training.

2. Every lesson should be made to reveal Christ and the relation of his love to human need.

3. There is needed some service or plan by which school and Church may be more closely united.

4. The lack of more direct results might be overcome by two sessions of the school each Sunday, one for Bible study and one for special work along devotional and reformatory lines: one Sunday being given to the catechism, another to prayer and praise service, another to missionary and benevolent work, another to temperance, etc.

5. There is a difficulty in combining improved methods of educational work, with their accuracy and precision, with spiritual power.

6. Spiritual life should be first sought, and then

as much of method and machinery employed as will give it full expression, and no more.

7. The entire family should attend both school and church; the regular attendance of pupils on church service would be of great advantage to teachers seeking to secure spiritual results.

8. Interest children in prayer-meeting. This can be done by arranging to have them participate in the service by repeating selections of Scripture or verses from the hymnal.

9. The truth should be impressed on teachers that they teach not merely for the sake of conveying information about God's word, but that they teach God's word in order to secure results in the character of the pupil.

10. Teachers should be led to feel the responsibility of their position as the pastor's aids in the spiritual work of the Church.

11. Some modification of our present plan of Sunday service, so that we shall have, 1.) A preaching service; 2.) A teaching service; 3.) A service of prayer and praise. At this latter service the fruit of the day's teaching and preaching can be reaped.

12. An awakening among pastors concerning their relation to the Sunday-school is greatly needed in order that, 1.) The school may have the benefit of his presence and aid; 2.) He may be able to control the school in the interest of revival and pastoral work.

13. There should be a pruning of the teaching force of our schools, the careless, frivolous, skeptical and worldly teachers should be requested to resign, and godly, devoted teachers put into their places. Larger classes and fewer teachers if necessary, but more spirituality and religious life on the part of those who teach is an absolute necessity.

14. Depend more on the officers and teachers of the school for aggressive work; if they know you depend on them they will be more vigilant.

15. Hold special children's meetings on Friday afternoon after school. Make them religious. Keep a revival in view.

16. Put converted children into classes with older people.

17. Make wise selection from the great mass of instrumentalities and appliances. Do not try to use too many. Subordinate all helps to their proper place.

18. Keep God's word in the hands of the pupils; use the Lesson Leaves at home; put the Bible into the school.

Brother Bilious.

HE was a good man, and might have been a good teacher, for he had knowledge of the Bible and had sufficient culture to enable him to use the best helps in its interpretation. But somehow or other the boys in his class did not take to him. The bashful ones were afraid of him, and the bold ones did what they could to torment him. This he bore with meekness as a part of his allotted burden in life, often sighing heavily in the presence of his class, and warning them of the consequences of wrong-doing. But the only effect was to increase the timidity of the bashful and add to the enjoyment of the bold. The truth is, he had never succeeded in getting hold of their hearts.

Brother Bilious took very sad views of life and of duty. He rarely smiled, and when he did it was such a solemn, sickly smile that on the faces of some men it would have been called a frown. A good, hearty laugh was something he had not enjoyed since the days of his boyhood, and he shook his head sadly when he found others shaking their sides merrily. He had no experience of what the psalmist called the "joy" of salvation. Neither could he offer "sacrifices of joy," or "shout aloud for joy." This world was to him, as he often said, "a wilderness of woe," and he did all he could to make it such to his family and his friends.

His pastor respected him as a worthy man, but never felt quite easy or comfortable in his presence. How could he, when Brother Bilious never saw him without having some gloomy tale to relate? Some poor soul had gone astray; or the church was in a state of spiritual death; or the congregations were dwindling; or the meetings had lost the fire they used to have when he "joined the Church, forty years ago." He more than hinted that the fault was in the minister, and that if he were only more faithful every thing would brighten up. As if any thing could brighten up when Brother Bilious was nigh!

His calls at the parsonage were seasons of gloom. The pastor might be rejoicing at evidences of increasing religious interest in the congregation, but Brother Bilious would neutralize all this joy in less

than five minutes. More than once he watched by the church door on Sunday morning for the coming of the pastor, and button-holed him in the lobby with melancholy recital of his fears and his sorrows. More than one good sermon was utterly spoiled by his untimely and thoughtless tale of trouble.

It is possible for a good man to be intensely disagreeable, and of this sort are those who belong to the Bilious family. It requires patience, tact, grace to get along with them, and the pastor or Sunday-school superintendent who can manage to prevent their gloomy shadows from scattering all light from church or school is worthy of all praise.

The Link between the Church and the Sunday-School.

IN the relations of the Sunday-school and the organized Church there is often "a missing link" which is greatly needed. The Sunday-school is the place in which the Bible is studied and religious impressions are made. The Church is the organized body of believers in Christ. There is need in many schools of a link to unite these two institutions, by furnishing the means whereby those who have learned the truth in the Sunday-school shall become by a living experience members of the Christian Church.

There are thousands of young people who grow up in our Sunday-schools, and finally grow out of them, without becoming members of the Church. The reasons for this result are various. It may be because the Church and the Sunday-school are conducted as separate institutions, by different sets of workers; because no effort is made by parents, teachers, superintendents, or pastors to induce the scholars to attend the church services and become interested in the church work, or because the teachers are lacking in the religious life, and do not present an earnest Christianity to their pupils.

But we venture the opinion that one reason why many of our scholars are lost to the Church is because the "evangelistic" or "revival" methods of the church are not directed as they should be, toward the members of the Sunday-school. A church holds a series of revival meetings in the winter, perhaps employs an evangelist, and makes a mighty though sporadic endeavor after the salvation of souls. But all the meetings are held in the evening, when but few of the children of the Sunday-school, or even the young people who are attending school, can be present. All the energies of the church are spent in attracting the non-church-going men and women, or the few unconverted church-goers, while the boys and girls of the Sunday-school are left unnoticed.

There are multitudes of our young people who are well informed in the Bible, yet never come into

contact with spiritual experience. They hear none of the testimonies in the class-meeting, and none of the exhortations of the prayer-meeting. Religion is constantly brought before them in the abstract, but never in the concrete. They are not far from the kingdom of heaven, but nothing is done definitely to bring them into the kingdom.

We urge that in our revival methods we aim more directly at reaching the young people who are under our influence in the Sunday-school. First of all, let us have spiritually minded teachers and superintendents, who will work in the revival spirit all the year, and aim for the salvation of their scholars. Next, let there be on one Sunday of each month a shortening of the general exercises of the school, and a warm prayer-meeting, with short prayers, living testimonies of personal experience, an earnest exhortation, and an opportunity to make public decision for Christ. Bring the revival service into the Sunday-school, if we cannot bring the Sunday-school to the revival service.

We would suggest that the primary department be either dismissed before this prayer-meeting, or be kept apart from it. Perhaps some of the youngest scholars in the intermediate department, just advanced from the primary, might also be sent home. Their readiness to respond to the pastor's invitation may deter the older scholars, and another meeting might be held especially for the little children, and adapted to their needs.

There is another important duty. As soon as our young people are awakened to an interest in personal religion they should be immediately brought under the influence of the Church's training. They should hear the testimonies of Christians in the class-meeting, and learn to express their own experience. They should take part in the young people's prayer-meeting, and as soon as is suitable in the Church prayer-meeting also. They should be set at work in all the spiritual activities of the Church.

By this means, or by others, the Sunday-school may become, even more than it is now, a source of supply to the membership and the religious power of the Church.

A Focus-Point.

He has a lens in his hand. He holds it in the sunshine, poising it above a piece of paper. He waits patiently for results. He does not pull his lens away and then thrust it forward, but steadfastly holds, and patiently waits. That lens is gathering up and bringing to a point the rays of the sun that fall upon it. Each separate ray makes no unusual warmth, but watch under the lens that intense flash in the focus-point. How it glitters, that little disk of fire! How it dazzles your sight! How—but look! Smoke is rising from the paper! Flame

now! The paper is quickly consumed. The success of the kindling was due to the bringing of the rays to a point, and then patiently holding them there.

The man who handles that lens is a teacher in the Sunday-school, and in his relations to his class he will do a like thing. The focus-point with him in his work is the bringing of his scholars to Jesus, and he makes every separate ray of effort bend that way.

He is teaching. It may be the geography of the lesson first arrests his attention, but in leading his scholars over those old rebellious roads of Judea he will not forget the sorrowful way leading up to Calvary. When it is the simple Gospel, how he will clear away all obstacles that there may be a straightforward looking to the cross.

He is calling upon his scholars. In all his intercourse as a friend, he will not let them lose sight of the Friend above all others.

He is praying for his class. He does not forget that focus-point of his efforts. His burning prayer is, "Give me these souls for Jesus, O God!"

He watches his example. He specially strives that his conduct shall lead Christ-ward, and that Monday's life shall not hinder Sunday's teachings. He not only makes the saving of souls the focus-point of his efforts, but he patiently holds to this one great end his teaching, his intercourse, his daily conduct, his supplications.

What will be the inevitable result of such persistent efforts? There will be a flame of conviction breaking out in his scholars' hearts, a burning need in which prejudice and procrastination and the resistance of a will, human and selfish, shall be consumed away, and the soul be melted into submission to God. Try it, holder of this powerful lens, you that have a place in the Sunday-school. Have this focus-point, and the Sun of Righteousness will not suffer it to be in vain.

Notoriety.

THERE are some persons who have a thirst for notoriety. They would "rather be kicked than not be noticed," and are led into all sorts of extravagances in order to accomplish their desires.

The boy-criminal, urged on by his vile comrades, is not satisfied until he has achieved some distinction that brings notoriety, even though it be as a murderer. He will stop at nothing, and even "cheats the gallows" by committing suicide, in order to put the finishing touch to his remarkable career.

The thirst for this cheap fame is not confined solely to the slums of the city, but finds its votaries even in cultivated society, in the pulpit, and by the fireside.

"As pants the hart for living streams," so pant

they for public recognition, for a more extended notoriety, and the deeds they perform are not infrequently of a most astonishing character.

There is an enviable and an unenviable notoriety, but the word has become so linked with evil that when we speak of a notorious person the implication is that he has not walked uprightly or labored worthily.

Avoid the notoriety that comes of a display of eccentricities. Rebuke a disposition to excel in that which is not excellent. Keep yourself within bounds. If you have genius let it distinguish itself in a dignified and proper manner. Seek no erratic channels.

We should cultivate humility rather than notoriety, and desire the approval of God rather than the applause of men.

The Light in the Knockers.

ATTACHED to an old church door is a knocker, a venerable relic of those far-away days when men fled to that sacred inclosure, the church, as a place of refuge. The knocker is a bulky one, and inside, it is said, a lamp was set at night. There are the holes through which the friendly light flashed out a guiding ray to some poor, perplexed fellow, as if saying, "This way, friend, this way! Here I am!" As we look we seem to be in the dim, distant days when men fled to this spot for seclusion from some pursuing hand—and hark! You seem to hear the sound of hurrying feet in the darkness. Some one looks anxiously toward the shadowy pile, wondering how he may enter. Lo! as he lifts his eyes he sees the light in the knocker, and now how joyfully the echoes of his appeal ring out in the night!

A light in the knocker! In our instruction of the children, did we ever think that we may need to be more explicit on the subject of religion?

We say, "Religion is free. You can have it. A door will open for you. Be a Christian." "Yes," is the answering thought of some child's heart. "Any one can be a Christian, but *how*? *How*?" Religion so free is yet a mystery. Just what must one do to be a Christian? Make plain what seems to you simple steps—prayer, repentance, submission, faith. Put a light in the knocker.

The Father of the Faithful.

BY B.

THE lessons of February include a large part of the life of Abraham, the last lesson of January beginning it by giving the "Call," and the first lesson of March ending it by giving the "Offering of Isaac," showing the initial and the crowning acts of faith in the "Father of the faithful." In the first he casts the past into the hands of God, and leaves home and kindred to go whither he knows not; in the last he puts the future into the hands of God by

the absolute surrender of Isaac, with whom the whole promise is involved. The simple child-like honesty of the first, and the wonderful maturity of faith in the last, suggest events between that must be worth our examination. We have these events in the lessons of February, which give special incidents in the life of this wonderful believer, between the call, with its first obedience, and the offering of Isaac, with its last and most sublime obedience.

Let us look first at the story itself as given to us in these lessons. Having gone down into Egypt, Abram and Lot became very rich in cattle and silver and gold, and coming back into Canaan their herdmen began to crowd one another. For peace Abram suggested division, and for self Lot made his choice, and settled in the plain. Abram received permission to wander about and enjoy the sense of ownership in the whole land, which was to belong to his posterity. The capture of Lot by the Eastern kings and his release by Abram followed. Then came the interview with Melchizedek. We next have an account of the covenant, in the announcement of which God showed the tribulation of the people and their certain deliverance. After this occurred the birth of Ishmael; a repetition of the covenant; the change of the name Abram, "the exalted father," to Abraham, "the father of a multitude," and the promise of the birth of Isaac. In connection with the announcement of the destruction of Sodom we have Abraham's plea for the doomed city. Then followed the destruction of Sodom and the other cities of the plain after the escape of Lot. The good patriarch now remained in the southern part of the land waiting for the fulfillment of promise, which came in the birth of Isaac. Many years afterward the test in the land of Moriah was made, and God again repeated the promise, including the world's blessing in the seed of Abraham. Sarah died at Hebron, and Abraham married Keturah, from whom sprang the Arabian tribes. Abraham died in Hebron aged one hundred and seventy-five years.

The four lessons bring out four points of importance:

First, *Choice*. The generous patriarch chose to give Lot his choice, and Lot chose without one thought of Abraham's good. Lot, without faith, took what he saw as seeming to be good for him; Abram, believing what God had promised, took what was left without question as to what should come of it.

Second, *Reward*. There came to both the fruits of the choices they had made. Lot had happy results, doubtless, as he delighted in the fruitfulness of the luxuriant land, and the pleasure of his temporal and temporary prosperity. But amid it all came the assault of the Eastern kings, and the carrying away of Lot with much of his treasure. Abram, however, delighted in what was better; he received in the vision God's good promise of blessing, when not the part of the land that somebody had left should be his, but the whole of it, in ample breadth, should be the rich home of his posterity.

The rewards, too, as the choices had been, were based in the selfishness of the one and the unselfishness of the other: Lot, with admixture of trouble and peril, enjoyed what he had; Abram rejoiced in what his posterity were to have.

Third, *Intercession*. The Lord personally announced to Abraham what was to come to the cities of the plain because of their sins, and the kind patriarch pleaded in behalf of his sad relatives, who, though not to blame for the sin, were yet at fault in having put themselves into the fellowship of sinners. The coming doom of sinners stirred the holy, loving heart to make use of the intimacy God had permitted in pleading, in the name of the related few, in behalf of the guilty many.

Fourth, *Punishment*. The impending penalty did fall, Lot and his daughters barely escaping with their lives, and that only by helpful mercy, while the lingering wife and mother suffered death for her foolish delay. The terrific tempest, which Abraham could perhaps see from his distant home, brought sadness to his unselfish heart, which, in solicitous grief, was a vicarious sufferer, as he had been a loving pleader. Sin ruined the sinners, imperiled those associated with them, and burdened, to deepest sorrow, the loving patriarch.

This month is full of Gospel truth. There is an infinite God who has condescended to be intimate with men; of this Jesus perfectly assures us. The dreadful consequences of sin are declared, but the pity is likewise shown, pity that would gladly turn the tempests of wrath from the heads of guilty men. Patient pleading is here, and patient hearing of it. But God has made himself the pleader with himself, in behalf of the sinners, who have no claim to make before him. But, still more, he has made a plan by which he can show the trembling sinner that the joint plea of sinner and Saviour is in perfect harmony with the infinite justice; and therefore of certain benefit if the simple conditions are complied with. The lessons emphasize the conditions. First, *As you will*. If you want to be saved you have but to choose to be. Love gives this privilege of choice, and continues it until the verge of ruin. Lot made an early unwise choice, but a later wise one, while his wife made a final foolish and fatal one. So it is, for eternal life or death—as you will! The other condition is, *As God wills*. Abraham's faith was counted unto him for righteousness, because it procured righteousness. Surrender unto God is the token of a pure heart and of submission unto holy guidance, and these guarantee righteousness. Here are *consequences*, too, first, in a glorious future to the believer, in whose seed all the nations of the earth were to be blessed; and second, in a destruction from the presence of the Lord of those who, breaking his law, would not return unto him. Sin comes by choice; mercy is offered upon choice; the plea is made looking toward choice. But there is penalty that goes beyond the pleading; sacrifice having been made, and advocacy established, the sinner's choice may exceed the reach of the plea; the

awful Avenger may come in spite of the patient Mediator. The month begins with choice and ends with wrath; but we are yet between them, in the waiting of mercy. From before the wrathful end we can see the pity that tempers the bitterness of vengeance; from after it we may be forever dead, as were the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, to the mercy that yet endureth forever.

All Bearing on One Point.

BY REV. E. A. RAND.

THEY had been talking—Carrie Marston and her friend, Mrs. Field—about Sunday-school work. Carrie, a recent beginner in teaching, was trying to reap some new ideas from the experience of Mrs. Field, who had had singular success in the Sunday-school field. The conversation finally dragged a little. The two ladies went to a window overlooking the harbor, whose blue waves were riding toward land, each lifting a cap of white, rustling foam.

"Why, Mrs. Field, watch that vessel trying to round Sandy Point!" exclaimed Carrie. "What a pretty sight!"

It was a fascinating scene. A vessel that had thrown out sail after sail till it towered like a pyramid of snowy canvas was dashing before the wind and driving triumphantly round the long, narrow promontory of sand.

"There, Carrie, that illustrates what I mean. Every thing done on board that ship all tends toward one result, to get her round that point. Every sail that has been stretched, every rope that is pulled, every pressure on the rudder—it all aims to do just one thing, get that ship safely and quickly round the point. In just that way in our Sunday-school work all our efforts ought to bear on this one great point, to get our scholars to Christ. That is the supreme end of our work. Whatever we do, we want it all to tell in the direction of character; a will given to Christ and a life made like his. Am I not right?"

"O, yes! Of course."

After her friend had left her Carrie sat by the window, watching that vessel and busily thinking. She was deeply stirred by what had been said. She had gone into Sunday-school to teach because she had been asked. She had gone there to hear the lesson, often good and oftener poor, that her scholars might bring her. She had become a teacher because—what? To make a frank, full confession, she did not know definitely, sharply, what she was in the Sunday-school for.

Rap—rap—rap!

Three blows on the front door with its old-fashioned knocker took her away from the window, and hurrying to the door she saw Joe Emery, one of her Sunday-school class.

"I—I thought—may be—you could give me a lesson-paper, Miss Marston. I lost mine."

"You shall have one. Come in!"

As he sat down she looked at him, and it was

through the light of the new motive shining out of Mrs. Field's conversation. He was no longer a certain Joe Emery, a shabbily dressed boy, from a poor home where the father was a drunkard and where a basket of food would be acceptable to four or five hungry Emerys, but he was Joe Emery, an immortal soul that must be saved, for whom Christ died; and somehow she, the teacher, must guide this boy by her own wise, loving hands to the Christ of the ages, and through this boy she must influence his home. Was not that shameless drunkard her "neighbor" tripped up by the bottle? She now acted in the light of this conviction of the important relations existing between her and this boy.

"I'll give him a lesson paper," she thought, and then, seeing a little package of "seed," as Mrs. Field called them—bright Sunday-school papers that she had left with Carrie that day—Carrie added to herself, "I will give him a paper. What shall it be? I will put in a temperance paper too. His father may see it." She made a selection, and then from her heart a little prayer winged its way silently to God: "Dear Father, bless what I am doing."

She turned to Joe and said, "Here is your lesson-paper; and don't you want this paper?"

"Thank you."

"And, Joe, I want you to read what this paper says about being a Christian. Will you? There! That is the piece!"

"Yes'm."

"And, Joe"—she spoke earnestly—"don't you think it is time for *you* to be a Christian?"

He hung his head and was silent.

"You will think about it?"

"Yes'm."

"Joe, I will pray for you."

If she could have seen the boy's eyes, as he went away, shining, with the tears trickling down his cheeks!

Carrie Marston followed up this effort. She kept the thought of a new life before Joe, and before God, in her prayers, she held up her desire that he would save the boy, and stay, too, a drunken father in his course.

One winter day the old-fashioned knocker again rang out a summons to the door. There on the step stood Joe's father, his hat off, his eyes flashing with a desire to begin his story.

"Miss Marston, I wanted to be the first to say that Joe came home from the meetin' last night in church, and said teacher wouldn't let him off and he had made up his mind to begin a new life. And I said to his mother it was time for me, and I wouldn't be so mean—the bigger sinner—to let Joe start alone!"

O, if there are angels hovering round to carry home the tidings of a soul's salvation—and I believe there are—then they must have poised their wings that morning above the old door-step, and, catching the tidings on earth, winged their way up through the bright, frosty skies, turning winter to summer as they jubilantly sang of a Gospel told and sinners saved.

Superseded.

BY REV. A. RUYTER.

POWER is sweet, and no man can let it slip from his grasp without a secret pang. That we know right well, but what is strange is this—that a gentle person is often the one who clings to it most tenderly and is ready to fight a bitter battle to retain it.

Don't you think so? Then open wide the eyes of your mind and see and learn.

Years ago there was a rap at my study door and in walked a tall gentleman—as tall as a lumberman from Maine—and on his handsome face was stamped the mark of despondency. He was a man who perpetually undervalued himself. His conversation was apologetic, and he was too much inclined to lose sight of the single talent which divine goodness had given to him.

"I must give up my position in the school," he said, "for I am tired of it, and more than that, am unfit for it."

He was superintendent of a baby mission school, which for years we hoped would grow, but which remained a baby still.

"I agree with you fully as to your unfitness," and at this innocent remark of mine he seemed to be displeased; "but hold on a little longer, and we may find the right person yet."

A year later he came again, and his face was like a thunder-cloud, and dismay, anger, and grief played like lightning-flashes over it.

"Have you heard the news?" he stuttered forth in great nervous excitement. "There was an election in the school last night, and young Thomas Talker was elected to be superintendent for the coming year."

"My heartiest congratulations that you have been relieved."

Somehow he did not receive these congratulations in a very joyful spirit, and so I added:

"Did you not say when you were here last that you were tired of the position, that you were unfit for it, and that you would be glad to have another take your place?"

"Y-e-s," was his slow reply, "I did; but then I do not like the way I was treated. I was willing to hold office just one year longer, and then I would have resigned of my own free will, but I do not like the way I was turned out. And then to think of putting in a young man in my place, who is so unfit and has had no experience!"

Alas! for poor human nature! It is pleasant to hold office and to be somebody, but to bow gracefully and retire from public observation is hard indeed. If you cannot be president of some obscure society, it is delightful to be vice-president, for, though you may have nothing to do, there is the honor—O, think of that! Push your way into prominence in Church or State, and then talk of the moral beauty of growing like a lily in some obscure corner! Become great and noted, and then it is easy to warble that line of one of Charles Wesley's hymns:

"Keep me little and unknown."

But will you sing that line when your earthly powers begin to fail, or when aspiring genius pushes you into the background? If so, then you are a true soul and a member of God's nobility.

The slowest wounds to heal are those of wounded pride. It hurts to be superseded. It takes religion to see another fill the place that we have filled so long, and perhaps so well, and to admit that he is far from a failure, and to say from a sincere heart, "God bless him and make him more useful than I was ever able to be." But it is a grand thing thus to triumph, and to feel if another has the office that we would like to keep we shall not become soured thereby.

One thing is as clear as a sunbeam. It is ever a mistake for a man to place his peace of mind on the results of a popular vote. There are so many things which affect it. Honest merit does not always get the majority of all votes cast. You have held the position of superintendent or secretary or librarian in the Sunday-school, and now there is a desire for change. You have done well, but there is a feeling that another person can do as well and possibly better. Keep your soul in patience. To cry out against this feeling will not quench but rather stimulate it. You have had a long lease of power; now give some other person the chance he covets.

Perhaps a secret movement was brought against you, and your friends were not aware of it until the result of the election revealed it. If so, it is a pity, but all that you can do is to submit. It is wrong to make you the victim of an election plot, but it does no good but much harm to retain evil thoughts. The good that you have done will remain, and time will vindicate you. Cheer up, and believe this; for it is a truth which many know by blessed experience, that when one pathway to the man who is good and longs to be useful is closed God will open up, in answer to prayer, another, and, it may be, a wider path of usefulness.

Do not leave the Sunday-school because you have been superseded in office. Take a class, or, if nothing else is left, become a scholar. You will thereby grow in grace and show that you have a spirit which lifts you above the petty disappointments of life. Your example will be a healthy stimulus to others who will be inclined to turn away from any work because they have not that which they would like to do. If the election, like an unexpected earthquake, shook you out of office, do not let it shake you out of the school.

The mournful fact is that all of us, if we live long enough, will find ourselves superseded. The class will want a new teacher, the congregation a new preacher, the society clamor for new officers, the choir a new leader, and so on through all departments in life. In the race in life those who are in the front will grow weary, and other and stronger spirits will rush ahead. Be it so, for so God wills it. Others will increase and we decrease. Why

murmur or complain if the smile of God rests as sunlight on us and heaven is just ahead?

I strayed once into a preachers' meeting, and an old clergyman, loved and honored, arose and said: "I am now seventy years of age, and am still vigorous and can preach; in a few years I shall be old and cannot preach, but I do not want to stop working for the Master until the hour of death comes. When too old to preach I shall go to the Sunday-school and ask if there is not a class of little ones that I can teach and lead to Jesus, who loves them."

Surely it is a grand thing to go through life and to reach old age not soured by the disappointments one has met, but rather with a heart glowing with love to God and good-will to all his creatures!

Opening and Closing Services for First Quarter of 1887.

OPENING SERVICE.

- I. SILENCE.
- II. THE DOXOLOGY.
- III. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES.
SUPT. The LORD that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion.
SCHOOL. We will bless the LORD from this time forth for evermore.
SUPT. The earth is the LORD's, and the fullness thereof;
The world, and they that dwell therein.
For he hath founded it upon the seas,
And established it upon the floods.
SCHOOL. Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD?
Or who shall stand in his holy place?
SUPT. He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart;
Who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity,
nor sworn deceitfully.
He shall receive the blessing from the LORD,
And righteousness from the God of his salvation.
SCHOOL. This is the generation of them that seek him,
That seek thy face, O Jacob.

IV. SINGING.

V. PRAYER.

LESSON SERVICE.

- I. CLASS STUDY OF THE LESSON.
- II. SINGING LESSON HYMN.
- III. RECITATION OF THE TITLE, GOLDEN TEXT, OUTLINE, and DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION, by the school in concert.
- IV. REVIEW and APPLICATION OF THE LESSON, by Pastor or Superintendent.
- V. THE SUPPLEMENTAL LESSON. To consist of the Ten Commandments and of the First Chapter in Catechism Number One.
- VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS (especially of the Church service and week-evening prayer-meeting).

CLOSING SERVICE.

- I. SINGING.
- II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES.
SUPT. The LORD bless thee, and keep thee;
SCHOOL. The LORD make his face shine upon thee,
and be gracious unto thee;
SUPT. The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee,
and give thee peace.
- III. DISMISSION.

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

FIRST QUARTER: THREE MONTHS' STUDIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

B. C. 1918.]

LESSON VI. LOT'S CHOICE.

[Feb. 6]

Gen. 13. 1-13.

[Commit to memory verses 8-11.]



1 And A'bram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south.

2 And A'bram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.

3 And he went on his journeys from the south even to Beth'-el, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Beth'-el and Ha'i:

4 Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first, and there A'bram called on the name of the LORD.

5 And Lot also, which went with A'bram, had flocks, and herds, and tents.

6 And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together.

7 And there was a strife between the herdmen of A'bram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and

the Ca'naan-ites and the Per'iz-zite dwelt then in the land.

8 And A'bram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren.

9 Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.

10 And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jor'dan, that it was well watered every-where, before the LORD destroyed Sod'om and Go-mor'rah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zo'ar.

11 Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jor'dan: and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other.

12 A'bram dwelt in the land of Ca'naan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sod'om.

13 But the men of Sod'om were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.

General Statement.

Abram's journey to Egypt was not by divine command, but from lack of faith in God. It brought him into contact with the world, the very danger from which God had called him out of Chaldea; it led him to deception and selfishness, caring more for his own safety than for God's cause, and it threatened the ruin of the divine plans. Better that the servant of God endure hardship on the hills of Canaan than that he be enervated by the repose of Egypt! He is driven out of the dangerous land, and returns with humbled heart to his altar at Beth-el. But new dangers arise with worldly cares and worldly interests. Riches separate the two pilgrims, who have passed through trials together. From the heights of Beth-el, Abram and Lot survey the land of promise. Upon one side loom up the mountains, affording a fair support to flocks, and giving to God's people isolation from contaminating influences. On the other side lies the deep valley, with its warm air, its abundant vegetation, and its cities, the abodes of sin. Adversity with God and prosperity with the world are in the balance. Lot chooses the latter, descends to the plain, and pitches his moving tent nearer and nearer to wicked Sodom. Abram chooses the kingdom of God and the rewards of faith. He dwells alone upon the mountains, and finds an abundant recompense in communion with his God.

Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verses 1. Abram went up. He was driven out of Egypt as a result of his deception in declaring Sarai his wife to be his sister. He went up, because Egypt being a lowland country, and Canaan a highland, the journey is a continual ascent. **Out of Egypt.** This was a flourishing country, and at that time the most civilized on the earth. The pyramids had already been built, and the capital was at Memphis, a little south of the Delta. **And his wife.** She is mentioned as the cause of his expulsion from the land. **Lot with him.** Lot was Abram's nephew, the son of his elder brother, Haran, who died before the migration from Chaldea. **Into the south.** This is the region on the south of Palestine, frequently called "the Negeb," a plain extending from Hebron to the desert.



2. Abram was very rich. Like his descendants, he was a successful trader, and gained large profit, probably, by supplying the Egyptians with cattle, and the skins and fleeces of his flocks. The Hebrew means, literally, "very heavy," which suggests that riches are apt to be a burden. **In cattle.** Under this general

term may be included camels, oxen, sheep, and goats. **Silver.** Some are of opinion that in that age silver was more scarce, and considered more valuable, than gold. **Gold.** In the form of jewelry and of rings, which were used as currency, as coined money was as yet unknown. (1) *Riches often bring trouble to their owners.* (2) *Sometimes God tries his servants by riches, sometimes by poverty, yet Abram and Lazarus are equally beloved.*

3. He went on his journeys. That is, in successive encampments, as he found pasturage for his flocks. **Even to Beth-el.** He pursued the northern road, past what was afterward Jerusalem, to the site of Beth-el, twelve miles north. **Hai.** A place near Beth-el, long afterward destroyed by Abram's descendants. Josh. 7.

4. The place of the altar. Here Abram had built an altar, and here he now renews it. It is noteworthy that Beth-el, "the house of God," was the seat of a sanctuary down to the end of Israelite history. (3) *Worship should have both its regular time and its regular place. At the first.* See Lesson V, verse 8. It was well for Abram, after his separation from God in worldly Egypt, to get back to the place of the altar. (4) *Beth-el is better for the soul than Egypt, with all its wealth and ease. Called on the name of the Lord.* He renewed his religious services, which may have been interrupted during his sojourn in Egypt; perhaps showed penitence for his unbidden journey, and gratitude for deliverance from the unbidden danger. (5) *Worldly association is apt to interrupt heavenly communion.*

5. Lot also which went with Abram. He was with him, but the history shows that he was not in true fellowship with him. Lot cared more for earth, and Abram cared more for heaven. **Had flocks.** (6) *God's blessing on the righteous is extended to those who are united with them.*

6. The land was not able. They moved in a vast caravan, spreading over the land for pasturage, consuming the natural growth without planting, and requiring much room, especially as the land was just recovering from a dearth. **Could not dwell together.** Matthew Henry says, "Want and wanderings could not separate between Abram and Lot; but riches did it."

7. There was a strife. The land was common, neither party having ownership; each was eager for the best pasturage and springs of water; and a collision was unavoidable. (7) *How much trouble comes from the opposing interests of property and the selfishness of the human heart! Between the herdmen.* Such feuds between clans are often noticed by travelers in the East. **The Canaanite.** A race of Hamite origin, mainly settled upon the sea-coast plain and in the Jordan valley. **Perizzite.** The word means "villager," and seems to point to a people scattered in small settlements over the country. They were found as late as the time of Ezra, Ezra 9. 1. **Dwelt there in the land.** Their presence is mentioned, both as a cause of the scarcity of food and as a reason why Abram and Lot, for their own honor and safety, should live at peace with each other. (8) *Let us remember that the quarrels of Christians are before the eyes of the world.*

8. And Abram said. See in this address the calmness, nobility, generosity, and peaceful spirit of the patriarch. As Murphy says, "He walks in the moral atmosphere of the Sermon on the Mount." **Let there be no strife.** We may almost infer from the tone of this passage that Lot had begun to take sides with his servants. **We be brethren.** The Hebrews used this term of all kinsmen; but Abram and Lot were more

closely related; for it is believed that Sarai, Abram's wife, was Lot's sister. They were united by ties of blood, of marriage, of interest, and of religion.

9. The whole land. Abram, as the head of the family and the heir of the covenant, possessed the first right of choice in the land, but he who has the promises of God can afford to be generous. (9) *Teacher, enforce the lesson of magnanimity and self-sacrifice. If thou wilt take.* Notice that the one who gave was, after all, the one who gained.

10. Lot lifted up his eyes. This expression is used even when standing upon a height, as here at Beth-el; he looked down upon a valley. **The plain of Jordan.** The old writers supposed that this refers to the bed of the Dead Sea, and that it was then a fertile plain; but most of the scholars now think that the Dead Sea was already in existence, and that the place referred to is the plain at the mouth of the Jordan, bounded by mountains on the east and west. **Well watered.** By the winding river, the streams flowing into it, and the springs which abound at the foot of the mountains. This is the first mention of the Jordan in the Bible. **Before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.** Upon the plain, probably scattered through the valley above the Dead Sea, were situated five cities or villages. **Even as the garden of the Lord.** The level plain, green with pasture land, and lit with cities, seemed like a memory of the Garden of Eden. **Like the land of Egypt.** Where the land was watered by the Nile, populous and thoroughly cultivated, and unlike the thinly occupied mountains of Canaan. **As thou comest to Zoar.** This was the smallest, and either the nearest of the five cities or the most distant. But Geikie suggests that Zoar may be a misreading for Zoan, which is found in the Syriac version. This would make the passage refer still to Egypt, of which Zoan was a frontier town.

11. Lot chose him all the plain. He chose, as many choose, that which seemed the most profitable, regardless of its moral associations. (10) *So men choose a place of residence where they can make money, even though the influence may be corrupting. Journeyed east.* He descended from the heights of Beth-el to the tropical and luxurious plain by the river.

12. Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan. From this choice the descendants of Abram were ever a mountain-people, living upon the hills of Palestine, and leaving the plains by the sea and the river to the heathen races. Abram chose separation from the world while Lot chose fellowship with the world. **The cities of the plain.** These were Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, and Zoar. They may have been small villages, but each was ruled by its own sheik or "king." Formerly they were supposed to have occupied what is now the southern lagoon of the Dead Sea; but the most recent expositors think that they were situated on the north of the sea. **Pitched his tent toward Sodom.** He came nearer to the city with each change in his location. When we meet with Lot again he is living not near, but in Sodom. (11) *See how the world and sin have their influence upon those who yield to them.*

13. Were wicked. The fertility of the soil made life easy, and the warm, enervating climate, with a crowded population, developed sensual vice. **Sinners before the Lord.** Rev. Ver., "against the Lord." Yet Lot stayed among them, and, in the end, greatly to his loss and even to his ruin. He grew rich, but he lost his riches; his family were all corrupted, and he lost for his descendants all share in the blessings of the covenant.

HOME READINGS.

- M. Lot's choice. Gen. 13. 1-13.
 Tu. Israel's choice. Josh. 24. 14-28.
 W. The evil of strife. Prov. 17. 1-4.
 Th. The law of love. Matt. 5. 38-48.
 F. The example of love. Phil. 2. 1-12.
 S. The beauty of peace. Psa. 133. 1-3; Rom. 12. 9-21.
 S. The Prince of peace. Isa. 40. 3-11.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness. Matt. 6. 33.

LESSON HYMN. C. M.

Hymnal, No. 610.
 Father, whate'er of earthly bliss
 Thy sovereign will denies,

Accepted at thy throne of grace,
 Let this petition rise:
 Give me a calm, a thankful heart,
 From every murmur free;
 The blessings of thy grace impart,
 And make me live to thee.
 Let the sweet hope that thou art mine
 My life and death attend;
 Thy presence through my journey shine,
 And crown my journey's end.

TIME.—1918 B. C. Doubtless an assumed date, to represent the fact that it was long enough after the settlement in Canaan for the increase of possessions to make the difference described in our lesson.

PLACES.—Egypt. Beth-el. Hai. Plain of Jordan. Sodom. Gomorrah. Zoar.

RULERS.—Same as previous lesson.
DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—Brotherly love.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. Abram's Offer.

What was Abram's worldly condition on his return from Egypt?

What does the possession of much gold and silver show as to his life in Egypt?

What common experience does this possession of property bring to Abram?

What trait of human nature is shown by the herdsmen?

What trait of character is shown by Abram's offer? Could this proposition have been influenced by God's promise to him that "this land" should be his?

What things show his utter unselfishness?

2. Lot's Choice.

What was Lot's worldly condition at the return from Egypt?

Is there a hint anywhere that possibly Lot was taking the part of his herdsmen?

What would that have shown as to the effect of prosperity upon him?

What things influenced Lot's choice?

What does the fact that he made a choice show about him?

What did Lot's choice necessarily cause?

Name the elements of character that Lot displayed.

What was the great difference between the two men?

Practical Teachings.

To get riches is not so hard as to use them wisely.

Wealth made Lot unfair, ungenerous, unfilial, covetous, willing to leave his best friend, willing to go among sinners, wholly selfish.

A time to make a decisive choice comes to every one. Lot's was a sad choice. Have you made yours?

The Golden Text gives the only safe rule. Will you follow it?

Hints for Home Study.

There are three things you should do in studying any lesson:

1. Read it; read it again; read it once more, slowly.

2. Put away the book, and tell it all over to yourself.

3. Now read once more to see what you have omitted. If you will study every lesson so, both for day-school and Sunday-school, you will learn more easily and better. Try it on this lesson.

4. Find five characteristics of Abram suggested by this lesson.

5. Repeat alone all the Golden Texts of these six lessons.

6. Is the occupation of mining suggested here?

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. Abram's Offer.

Why had Abram gone to Egypt?

What journey did he now make?

What shows Abram's prosperity?

To what place of former residence did he go?

What memorial of his former visit did he find?

What possessions had Lot?

What trouble grew out of the wealth of the two men?

What strife arose?

What plea for peace did Abram make?

What was his offer to Lot?

2. Lot's Choice.

What portion of the country did Lot choose?

What advantages did it possess?

To what is it likened?

Where did Abram dwell?

Near what city did Lot settle?

What was the character of his neighbors?

What effect had this evil association upon Lot? 2 Pet. 2, 8.

To what wise choice does the Golden Text counsel us?

Teachings of the Lesson.

What teaching do we here find concerning—

1. The duty of devotion?

2. The wise way to settle quarrels?

3. The danger of great riches?

Hints for Home Study.

Search out all the Bible incidents which are connected with Beth-el.

Learn how many times trouble sent Abram or his descendants to Egypt.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Where did Abram go when he came back from Egypt to Canaan? To Beth-el.

Who was with him? Lot, his nephew.

What had God given them? Great riches.

What formed a part of their riches? Large flocks of sheep and goats.

Who had a quarrel about the land? The servants, who took care of the sheep and goats.

Why did they quarrel? Because each wanted the best land for their flocks.

What did Abram say to Lot? "Let there be no strife between us."

What did he tell him to do? To take all the land he wanted.

What more did he give him? The first choice of the land.

Why was Abram so kind and generous to Lot? He said, "We are brothers."

What did Lot choose for his share? The well-watered plain of Jordan.

Why did he choose it? He saw it was the best part of the land.

What did this show Lot to be? Selfish and worldly.

Who offers to share his inheritance with us? Jesus, the Son and heir of God.

What does he call himself? Our Brother.

What does he tell us to choose? (Repeat the Golden Text.)

Words with Little People.

Do you ever choose the best places?

Do you think of others or yourself first?

Which did Jesus, our Brother, do?

"In honor preferring one another."

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. To what land was Abram driven by a famine? To the land of Egypt.

2. Where did he return from Egypt? To the land of Canaan.

3. What did Abram give to his nephew Lot? The choice of the land.

4. What did this show? A noble, generous nature.

5. What choice are we bidden in the Golden Text to make? "Seek ye," etc.

TEXTS AT CHURCH.

Morning Text.....

Evening Text.....

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

The Two Paths.

I. ABRAM'S PATH.

1. **Prayer.** "Called on.... Lord." v. 4.

"Because he hath inclined his ear." Psa. 112, 2.

2. **Peace.** "Be no strife." v. 8.

"Blessed are the peace-makers." Matt. 5, 9.

3. **Generosity.** "Land before thee." v. 2.

"In honor preferring one another." Rom. 12, 10.

4. **Self-denial.** "I will go." v. 9.

"Let him deny himself." Luke 9, 23.

5. **Separation from world.** "Canaan." v. 12.

"Be ye separate.... my sons." 2 Cor. 6, 15.

II. LOT'S PATH.

1. **Worldly desire.** "Behold.... plain." v. 10.

"Love not the world." 1 John 2, 15.

2. **Worldly choice.** "Chose.... plain." v. 11.

"Cannot serve God and mammon." Matt. 6, 24.

3. **Worldly Association.** "Toward Sodom." v. 12.

"Friendship of the world is enmity." Jas. 4, 4.

4. **Worldly danger.** "Wicked and sinners." v. 13.

"Evil communications corrupt." 1 Cor. 15, 33.

THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

Tests of Fidelity to God.

1. Abram's faith and loyalty to God were tested by the fascinations and allurements of Egypt. What Egypt was to him the world is to us. v. 1.

2. Abram was tried by the possession of riches, which endangered his communion with God. But we notice that though rich he maintained his altar of worship and his nobility of character. v. 2-4.

3. He was tested, as we are, by the conflict of interests with his brother-man and fellow-worshiper of God. Too often these influences lead to hard feelings and to open quarrels. Abram overcame them by generous acts. v. 5-7.

4. He was tested by the presence of the wicked people around him. The Canaanites were around Abram; the Sodomites were around Lot; but notice that one retained his independence, the other yielded to evil influence. v. 7-12.

5. His faith was tested by the seeming prosperity and advantage of the wicked over the good. "Faithful Abram upon the barren mountain; filthy Sodomites in a fruitful plain." So the psalmist's faith was tried. Psa. 73. Yet Abram trusted God, and found that God was indeed his friend, for the success of the wicked was short, and his own honors were enduring. v. 12, 13.

Berean Methods.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Give a brief but careful account of Abram's history in Egypt, showing how distrust of God leads to falsehood and to evil.... Why was it better for Abram to live in Canaan than in Egypt?... Trace his journeys as shown in this lesson, and draw the map to illustrate them, locating Egypt, Beth-el, the Jordan, Dead Sea, etc.... Show what the lesson teaches about riches: 1.) They give care; 2.) They breed discord; 3.) They cause selfishness; 4.) They draw into evil association.... We may draw two paths diverging from a point; one the path of God's service, the other the path of worldly interest. Abram chose one path, Lot the other. Note in the Analytical and Biblical Outline the traits shown in each choice. The teacher may anticipate the after history, and show the results of the choice to both Abram and Lot.... The lesson shows five ways in which Abram's character was tested, and how he stood the trial in each. (See Thoughts for Young People.)

References. FREEMAN'S HAND-BOOK. Vers. 2, 5: Pastoral wealth, 402.

Songs from the Epworth Hymnal.

- 193. I love thy will, O God.
- 210. Is my name written there?
- 214. Am I a soldier of the cross?
- 223. Take up the cross.
- 225. Soldiers who to Christ belong.
- 252. Stand up for Jesus.
- 263. I'm a pilgrim.
- 269. On Jordan's stormy banks I stand.

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. *Putting God First.* Print in large letters, "Duty," "Pleasure." Talk about duty; show that it is the right way, or God's way, for us. As you talk, outline a path running out from the word duty. With brown crayon put in something to represent stones here and there—some very large, others small. Explain that the right way often has rough places in it, and tell story of a child who told the truth

at the risk of punishment, in contrast with one who evaded the truth, and suffered more in the end. Make path running out from word pleasure, and with bright crayons put in something to represent flowers. Tell that this is the way the path looks to us, but if it is not the path God wants us to walk in the flowers turn to thorns in our hands. Call for Golden Text, explaining that seeking first the kingdom of God means doing the right thing, or walking in the path of duty.

Tell that our lesson to-day shows us two men, one of whom followed duty, the other pleasure.

Print "Abram," and review last lesson. Which way did Abram choose, when God told him to leave his present home and go to a strange land of which he knew nothing? See if children understand that it was his duty to go, because God called him. How may we know what duty is for us? Show that God speaks to us in his word, and through those who teach us God's word.

Print "Lot." Tell who he was, and why he went with his brother Abram. Show Abram and Lot had great flocks of sheep and goats and herds of cattle and camels. When they went to live in a place called Beth-el, in the land of Canaan, there was not room for all their great flocks and herds, and Abram told Lot to choose what part of the land he would take for his own. God had given this land to Abram, and he told Lot to take the first choice, and live just where he pleased.

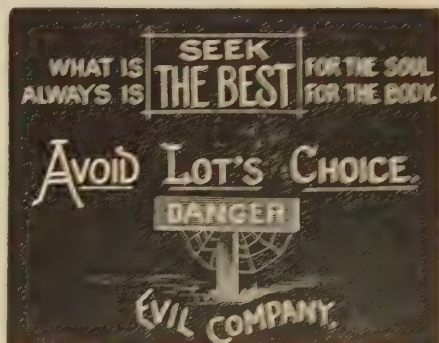


Abram and Lot looked off at the beautiful land. Abram looked out of kind, generous eyes, and Lot out of selfish eyes. There lay the rich plain of Jordan, and Lot chose that, not because he thought he could best serve God there, but because it looked so pleasant. You see he was looking at the flowers in the path of pleasure. He knew that the wicked city of Sodom was in this plain, but he put his own choice first, not God's choice.

Make a cross, and talk about the choice Jesus made for our sakes. Which path do we choose?

Blackboard.

BY J. E. PHIPPS, Esq.



DIRECTIONS FOR COLOR. Draw the words, "Seek the best," with red chalk. When the letters are finished take yellow chalk and shade them. Make the border of light blue. The sentence "Avoid Lot's Choice," should be the most prominent feature. Draw it with white chalk. Be careful to have the words that are opposite "The Best" colored in a way that they are

will read thus: "What is the best for the soul is the best for the body." The sign at the bottom of the board shows that there is danger in the companionship of evil men. The spider's web symbolizes the net or web of evil that entangles the one who seeks this place of danger. Draw the sign with brown chalk and red letters.

Lesson Word-Pictures.

Flocks and herds as far as one can see, all slowly moving up from Egypt into the land of the south—flocks and herds, bleating, lowing, crowding, pushing, a vast uneasy mass of four-footed travelers. There are two distinct flocks under two distinct owners: One has halted around Beth-el, beautiful Beth-el, where Abram once worshiped before, its associations rising up like the blue hill-tops that touch heaven. In the midst of his encampment once more rises the altar, and Abram bows before his God. Once more the purple smoke of sacrifice drifts upward and earth touches heaven. Old memories return to him, how he called upon God here in this very spot, and his soul went out to meet and be encompassed by the great Jehovah. Here Abram and Lot would halt. They are spreading out now over the land, that vast four-footed company, over the bleak hills, down into the rich sheltered valleys. But how the herdmen quarrel! With the noise of the bleating and the lowing, what sounds of scolding and bawling rise up into the ears of Abram! "It must not be!" he says, loving, generous, peace-making man. "Choose, Lot!" we seem to hear

him cry. "Take the first choice of the land. Go right, go left, and I will take what you leave." And Lot—he has gone up with his grasping, greedy spirit to some high point to view the land. What a fascinating sweep of plain and mountain, field and town, vineyard and river! To west and north-west rise the heights of Mount Ephraim, and in the north can one see those twin summits of Ebal and Gerizim? Looking in an easterly direction, Lot must have beheld the steep, rocky slopes of Mount Quarantana (as we know it). In the south, other heights lifted toward the sky their burden of cliff or forest, and could the highlands of Salem here be seen, throwing their rampart of blue along the horizon? But what particularly detains the eyes and engages the affections of Lot? It is that rich plain, like the garden of the Lord, down through which races the quick-footed Jordan. What pasturage for the hungry flocks! What water for their thirst! "I will take—all that," Lot is saying, and soon his flocks and herds are browsing amid the juicy herbage of that stretching plain. Abram's creatures are grazing where they may, back in Canaan, but Beth-el is there, and God is there. Stand now in the door of Lot's tent, and look off to the south. See the walls and towers of Sodom. Do not enter its gates even in thought. Vile are its habits, polluted its people. Hark! Already one seems to hear beneath the ground the rumblings of approaching judgment, and the skies above Sodom blacken with the wrath of an awful day of God. Lot has chosen all the plain of Jordan, and pitched his tent toward Sodom!

B. C. 1913.]

LESSON VII. GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAM.

[Feb. 13.]

Gen. 15. 5-18.

THE WITNESS.



[Commit to memory verses 5-7.]
5 And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

6 And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

7 And he said unto him, I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.

8 And he said, Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?

9 And he said unto him, Take me a heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon.

10 And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not.

11 And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, A'bra'm drove them away.

12 And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon A'bra'm; and, lo, a horror of great darkness fell upon him.

13 And he said unto A'bra'm, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;

14 And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.

15 And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.

16 But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Am'o-rites is not yet full.

17 And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.

18 In that same day the Lord made a covenant with A'bra'm, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of E'gypt unto the great river, the river Eu-phra'tes.

General Statement.

After Abram's generous treatment of Lot, he lived in peace for several years, making his home upon the hills of southern Canaan, near the city of Hebron. At this time the land was invaded by an army from Elam, on the eastern shore of the lower Tigris, a land which then aspired to empire over the east. The Elamites approached from the south, and carried away the inhabitants and booty of the cities in the plain, among them Lot and his family. Abram heard of his relative's misfortune, gathered his slaves and friends, and pursued the invaders. He defeated them in a night attack, rescued the prisoners, and restored the plunder. On his return he met Melchizedek, the priest-king of

Salem, and received from him God's blessing. After this God gave to Abram a new and clearer revelation of the future. Showing to the childless patriarch the starry host, God promised that his descendants should equal them in number, and as the token of his promise made a formal covenant with him. By divine direction Abram slew several kinds of animals and birds, divided them asunder and arranged them on opposite sides of a path. At night a fire and a cloud passed between the pieces, and Abram's spirit met God. The promise was repeated and made more specific, even to the prediction of the sojourn and enslavement in Egypt, the exodus, and the conquest of Palestine.

Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verses 5, He brought him forth. God called Abram to go out from his tent under the starry sky. **Tell the**

stars. To Noah the rainbow had been given as a token; to Abram the countless stars were shown as

illustrative of God's abundant promise. **So shall thy seed be.** Abram, a childless man of nearly ninety years, receives the promise that his descendants shall outnumber the visible stars. The seemingly impossible prediction has been fulfilled; the natural descendants of Abraham, the Jews and Arabians, number many millions, and his spiritual children, the believers in Christ, many millions more.

6. He believed. The word in Hebrew is *aman*, from which comes "Amen," an expression of faith or confidence. The statement means that he accepted God's promise, and relied upon it, without as yet a sign of its fulfillment. (1) *And shall not we trust God's word, attested as it has been by the experience of all saints?* **He counted it.** God saw his faith and gave it recognition. (2) *God marks and honors each spark of faith in a human heart.* **For righteousness.** God regarded Abram as a righteous man, not because of the goodness of his character, but because of the sincerity and strength of his faith. And while his faith in God was accepted as righteousness, it tended also toward righteousness of character. (3) *We are accepted, like Abraham, not for our works, but for our faith; but a true faith will inspire righteous works.*

7. He said. How God spoke we know not; perhaps by a silent but direct intimation to his consciousness. **I am the Lord that brought thee out.** God would show Abram that his entire life had been under a divine guidance. (4) *We are being led by the same unerring hand that directed the father of the faithful.* **Ur of the Chaldees.** A city south of the Euphrates river, and about midway between Babylon and the Persian Gulf. It was one of the earliest capitals of the Chaldean empire; but is now a heap of ruins, known as *Mugheir*. **To give thee this land.** The land of Canaan, in which his tent was then pitched, but as a wanderer only, with no settled abode; while the territory was already preoccupied by other races who were building cities.

8. Whereby shall I know. The question did not spring from lack of faith, but from a desire to receive a visible sign, which should at once confirm his own trust, and be a memorial for believers in after ages. (5) *True faith seeks an increase.*

9. And he said. God gave to Abram a covenant in the form of one man with another, as if they stood upon terms of equality. **Heifer, etc.** The animals and birds here named, were those used in sacrifice, and were all domestic, associated with man, and used for food. **Of three years old.** The age of maturity and perfection.

10. Divided them. In order to make an agreement most solemn and binding, sacrificial animals were slain, divided asunder, and laid on either side of a path, where the two parties to the covenant met, joined hands, and made their mutual promises. **Birds divided he not.** As there were two of each kind, one was laid opposite the other.

11. When the fowls came down. Rev. Ver. "the birds of prey;" as the vulture and the eagle, which in the East are the scavengers of the country. **Drove them away.** So that the offering might be kept un-mutilated and pure. (6) *Thus should we drive away the unclean and worldly thoughts which hinder the soul from full communion with God.*

12. The sun was going down. The preparation for the covenant occupied an entire day, after the

vision of the previous night. **A deep sleep fell.** Not an ordinary slumber, but a trance, in which the spiritual man is lifted to a peculiar state of receptivity to divine impressions. **A horror of great darkness.** Literally, "a horror, a great darkness;" meaning a peculiar awe and solemnity of the spirit. (7) *It is no light matter for men to meet with God.*

13. Thy seed shall be a stranger. The divine foreshadowings of the destiny of Abram's seed became more definite. The promise is not to be realized at once, but is delayed until the chosen family shall be schooled into preparation, and until the vengeance of heaven shall fall upon the ungodly races of Canaan and Egypt. **In a land that is not theirs.** A reference to the sojourn in Egypt. **Four hundred years.** One class of commentators date the beginning of the four centuries from the birth of Isaac; another, from the going down of Jacob's family to Egypt. This requires an addition of two hundred years to the ordinary chronology; but it gives time for the increase of the Israelites from seventy persons to two millions. (8) *Notice that adversity as well as prosperity is a part of God's plan.*

14. Will I judge. A prediction of the plagues which came upon Egypt. **Shall they come out.** Fulfilled in the exodus from Egypt under Moses. **With great substance.** Whether by plunder or by gift, perhaps by both, the Israelites carried much treasure out of Egypt. This was no more than a fair compensation for their unpaid labor in Egypt.

15. Thou shalt go to thy fathers. Not to the grave, for Abraham was buried far from the sepulchers of his ancestors; but to the place of departed spirits, where the souls of his fathers were awaiting him. (9) *Notice the hint of immortality in the Old Testament.* **A good old age.** Abraham lived to be one hundred and eighty-five years old.

16. In the fourth generation. "The fourth age;" not precisely four generations, but four times the length of a man's life, which was not far from a hundred years. **The Amorites.** These were the most important of the races inhabiting the mountains of Palestine, as the Canaanites were the most important on the lowlands. **Not yet full.** God saw that by the time when the Israelites would be ready to occupy the land of Canaan its earlier possessors would have filled up the cup of their crime and be ready for destruction. (10) *God's scepter of mercy to one nation is his sword of justice to another.*

17. A smoking furnace, and a burning lamp. Rev. Ver. "a flaming torch." Symbols of the divine presence, such as was seen by Moses in the burning bush. **Passed between those pieces.** And perhaps in passing consumed them, as the token of a ratified covenant.

18. A covenant. An agreement or mutual promise of mercy upon one hand and fidelity on the other. **River of Egypt.** Some think that this refers to the *Wady el Arish*, a small stream which was the southern boundary of Palestine; others, that it means the Nile, which we consider preferable. **Euphrates.** The great river of western Asia. The promise means that Abram's descendants should rule from the lands bordering on the Nile to those bordering on the Euphrates. It was fulfilled for only a brief period during the times of David and Solomon; but it might have been gained sooner and held longer had Israel's faith been equal to God's promise.

HOME READINGS.

- M. The covenant with Abram. Gen. 15. 1-18.
 Tu. The faith of Abraham. Rom. 4. 1-13.
 W. The children of Abraham. Gal. 3. 1-12.
 Th. The power of faith. Matt. 17. 14-27.
 F. The reward of faith. John 6. 25-47.
 S. The blessedness of faith. Psa. 105. 1-15.
 S. The requirement of faith. John 12. 35-50.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. Gen. 15. 1.

LESSON HYMN. L. M.

Hymnal, No. 461.

Take my poor heart, and let it be
 Forever closed to all but thee;
 Seal thou my breast, and let me wear
 That pledge of love forever there.

How blest are they who still abide
 Close sheltered in thy bleeding side!
 Who thence their life and strength derive,
 And by thee move, and in thee live.
 How can it be, thou heavenly King,
 That thou shouldst us to glory bring?
 Make slaves the partners of thy throne,
 Decked with a never-fading crown?

TIME.—1313 B. C.

PLACE.—Abram's home near Hebron.

RULERS.—Same as in last lesson.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—Justification by faith.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. A Vision.

What confirmation of the assertions of modern astronomy regarding the stars is hinted at in our lesson?

When did the ceremony which our lesson narrates begin, day or night?
 How long did it last?
 What vision was shown to Abram?
 How was the prophecy of this vision fulfilled?

2. A Covenant.

What was the ancient manner of confirming a covenant?

How many parties must there be to a covenant?

How many parties were there to this covenant?

How was God represented?

In what other instances did he appear represented by fire?

What was Abram's pledge in this covenant?

What did God pledge himself to perform for Abram?

When was the pledge fulfilled?

Practical Teachings.

God made a covenant with Abram in the blood of a heifer, a ram, and two birds. Abram accepted and believed.

God has made a covenant with us in the blood of his Son. Have we accepted?

Abram's faith was very great.

He owned no foot of land.

He had no child.

He was an old man.

God promised the whole land and a countless offspring of his very own. He believed.

We have more, vastly more, than Abram. Have we believed?

Hints for Home Study.

1. Study carefully all that had happened since the last lesson.

2. Find all you can as to the way covenants or agreements have been made by other nations.

3. Make a word-picture of this whole scene; counting the stars; slaying the sacrifice; arranging the pieces of the victims; beating off the birds of prey; overcome with fatigue, asleep; the furnace and lamp.

4. Write the story of Abram from the beginning to this event of his life.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. A Vision.

What promise was renewed to Abram about his posterity?

What was the result of Abram's faith?

What was God's purpose in calling him from his own country?

What sacrifice was he directed to offer?

How did he arrange his sacrifice?

What shows his care for his offering to God?

What happened to him near sunset?

Of what sorrow to his descendants was he assured?

What promise of deliverance was given to him?

How long was the captivity to last?

What reason was given for its long continuance?

What was said of Abram's long life?

2. A Covenant.

What is a covenant?

When did the Lord make a covenant with Abram?

What was promised to him?

Who are the true heirs of that covenant? Acts 3. 25.

What did God promise to be to Abram? (See Golden Text.)

What country, better than Canaan, did Abram expect for himself? Heb. 11. 10.

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where are we taught in this lesson—

1. That God demands faith?
2. That God encourages faith?
3. That God rewards faith?

Hints for Home Study.

Learn when God made another covenant with Abram. Through what one of Abram's descendants have all nations been blessed?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Who spoke to Abram in a vision by night? The Lord.

What did he say to him? (Repeat the Golden Text.)
 What did he tell him to do? To look up and count the stars?

Whom did the Lord compare with them? Abram's descendants.

What was his promise to him? "So shall thy seed be."

Did Abram believe God? He did, and God blessed him for his faith.

What did God direct Abram to prepare? The offerings for the covenant.

What is a covenant? A solemn promise or agreement.

How long did Abram watch by the offerings when they were ready? All day.

What happened when the sun was going down? A deep sleep fell upon him.

What else? A great darkness and terror.

Who appeared in the darkness? The Lord.

What did he make with Abram? A promise that his seed should possess Canaan.

What then passed between the pieces of the offering? A smoking furnace and a burning lamp.

Of what were these a sign? Of God's presence.

Of what was God's presence a sign? That he would faithfully keep his covenant with Abram.

Words with Little People.

Christ is the offering slain in God's covenant with you.

For his sake he promises to forgive all your sins.

He promises to accept you as his child.

He promises to give you the heavenly Canaan.

"And he is faithful that promised."

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. What did God say to Abram in the Golden Text? "Fear not," etc.

2. How great did God promise that Abram's seed should be? As many as the stars.

3. What was God's covenant with Abram concerning his seed? To give them the land of Canaan.

4. How did Abram receive God's promise? He believed in the Lord.

5. How may we be the children of Abram? By believing God's word.

TEXTS AT CHURCH.

Morning Text.....

Evening Text.....

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

The Covenant.

I. A PERSONAL COVENANT.

1. *He brought him forth abroad.* v. 5.

"To Abraham... were the promises." Gal. 3. 16.

2. *The Lord... a covenant... Abram.* v. 18.

"Blessing of Abraham... on the Gentiles." Gal. 3. 14.

II. A COVENANT OF GRACE.

1. *Tell the stars, if thou be able.* v. 5.

"So many as the stars." Heb. 11. 12.

2. *So shall thy seed be.* v. 5.

"As the stars... for multitude." Deut. 10. 22.

III. A COVENANT OF FAITH.

1. *He believed in the Lord.* v. 6.

"Staggered not at the promise." Rom. 4. 20.

2. *Counted it... for righteousness.* v. 6.

"Called the friend of God." James 2. 23.

IV. A SYMBOLIZED COVENANT.

1. *Whereby shall I know?*

"Show me a sign." Judg. 6. 17.

2. *Take me a heifer.* etc. v. 9.

"Bring your offering of the cattle." Lev. 1. 8.

3. *Divided them in the midst.* v. 10.

"They cut the calf in twain." Jer. 34. 18, 20.

4. *Smoking furnace... burning lamp.* v. 17.

"Our God is a consuming fire." Heb. 12. 29.

V. A COVENANT OF PROMISE.

1. *Thy seed shall be a stranger.* v. 13.

"The sojourning... of Israel." Exod. 12. 40.

2. *That nation....will I judge.* v. 14.
 "Signs and wonders....upon Egypt." Deut. 6. 22.
 3. *Come out with great substance.* v. 14.
 "They spoiled the Egyptians." Exod. 12. 36.
 4. *Unto thy seed....this land.* v. 18.
 "This is the land." Deut. 34. 4.

THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

The Children of Abraham.

1. The true children of Abraham are all who show Abram's faith in God's promise, and they are more numerous than the stars, for wherever there is a believer Abraham has a child. v. 5, 6.
2. The children of Abraham are reckoned as righteous by God, not because of their natural goodness, but because of their faith. Not by works, but by faith, we are saved. v. 6.
3. The children of Abraham are like their father, under God's especial care, and led by his hand. What a privilege to feel that God watches over us! v. 7.
4. The children of Abraham can enjoy personal communion with God. We need no slain beasts nor sprinkled blood, for the great Sacrifice has been rendered, and through it we can come to God. v. 8-12.
5. The children of Abraham must expect adversity and trial, for they need it. Just as the Israelites required the discipline of the sojourn to fit them for their promised land, so do we. v. 13, 14.
6. The children of Abraham, notwithstanding their trials, are sure of a goodly heritage. They have Canaan in sight, and will yet enjoy it. v. 15-18.

Berean Methods.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Find in the lesson the subjects for three word-pictures, which may be presented in opening the lesson: 1.) The Starry Host; 2.) The Divided Sacrifice; 3.) The Furnace and the Lamp....The covenant: 1.) What it promised on God's part; 2.) What it required on Abram's part....Abram's faith: 1.) Its difficulties, his age, childlessness, etc.; 2.) Its character—strong, direct, prayerful, etc.; 3.) Its results—to Abram, to his descendants....Call for examples of faith from other parts of the Bible....Who are now the inheritors of this covenant? (See Thoughts for Young People)....Notice how completely the promise in the covenant was fulfilled.

References. FREEMAN. Ver. 10: Cutting the covenant, 551. Ver. 6: The burning lamp, 6.

Songs from the Epworth Hymnal.

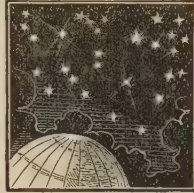
188. Lead, kindly Light.
 249. Jesus shall reign.
 261. I'm but a stranger here.
 262. My days are gliding swiftly by.
 264. When I can read my title clear.
 265. How happy every child of grace.
 271. Jerusalem the golden.
 276. Beulah Land.

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. *The Promise-keeping God.* Ask how many children have had promises made to them? By whom? Are promises ever broken? Do we ever make promises? Are we always able to keep them? By question and illustration or anecdote, bring out the truth that there is but One who can always be trusted

to keep his promises, and that One is the great loving and powerful God. To be taught: 1.) God leads his children. 2.) God talks with his children. 3.) God makes promises to his children.

1. Abram was one of God's children. God led Abram into the land of Canaan. He had led him to Beth-el, and then to Hebron, and now the Lord came to him in a vision, and he led him out where he could look up at the great sky full of twinkling lights. Notice that God did not lead Abram to a place where he must look down; God leads his children to look up. It was Satan, you remember, who wanted Jesus to look down. Remember that God's leading is always *up*—Satan's *down*.



2. God not only leads his children, but he talks to them. Abram had at this time no child, and yet God had told him that he would make of him a great nation. Abram did not see how this could be, but he knew that God knew all about it, and so he asked him. Then God told him to look up and see if he was able to count the stars, and he said to him, "So shall thy seed be." This meant that in the time to come Abram should have as many descendants as there were stars in the sky. Even now Abram could not see how this could be, but he believed God, and God was pleased to see his faith. God would talk much more with us if we would just believe him as Abram did.

3. In these days, when men make solemn promises to one another they make a written contract and sign their names to it. But in Abram's time they killed a lamb, cut it in two pieces, and walked together between them. This was called a covenant. God told Abram to kill some animals, and make all things ready. Then in the night time God came and Abram saw a smoking furnace and a burning lamp that passed between the pieces, and this was the sign of God's presence. So God made his covenant with Abram to give him the land of Canaan, and Abram believed God. God has made a greater covenant with us, and he has sent Jesus as the sign of his presence. His covenant promises us the heavenly Canaan, if we will simply, as Abram did, believe God. Will we?

Lesson Word Pictures.

It is in the night-time. Labor has ceased around the tents of Abram. The flocks are gathered into sheltered folds, or sleep in the fields watched by their vigilant keepers. Some bleating lamb seeks its mother, or a shepherd warns away a prowling wolf, but otherwise all is still. In the midst of the silence, a voice arouses Abram from sleep. Did some one call him? He could not be mistaken. It is the voice of the Lord speaking, then summoning him forth; the mysterious voice that called him out of Haran. Urged by this heavenly impulse, he steps to the door of his tent, and looks out. How cool the night-air! How still, how solitary! All familiar objects below are blotted out in the blackness of the night. But how the stars flash! A world in shadow below, but above, a golden day seems to have stamped the heavens with its shining foot-prints. Look up, Abram, look up! God is telling him to number the stars. There he stands, his face turned toward the heavens brilliant with clusters and single stars, with "Pleiades" and "Orion," "Maz-zaroth" and "Arcturus"—a shining host marching in silence through the sky until the gates of a new morning shall close upon them and hide them. Count them,

Abram, count them! Does he begin? Does he try to grasp with figures the gold-dust sprinkling one little corner of the heavens? He shakes his head. He cannot number them. "So shall thy seed be," is the word of the Lord, and the man without a child, this stranger in the Promised Land, alone, bows his head and believes that the word of the Lord shall be accomplished. The very land also that Abram walks upon shall be the inheritance of his seed, is God's assurance. Would God give him a sign? Yes. Abram is sent to his flocks and herds. He has brought from thence a heifer, a she goat, a ram. He bears also from the fields a turtle-dove and a young pigeon. He may be wondering what he is to do with these, but there their bodies lie in a heap, and Abram patiently watches, waiting for the will of the Lord. Do birds of prey fly down to tear the bodies with their ravenous beaks? Abram drives them away, watches and waits. Sarai may wonder. His herdsmen may look at him in surprise and question why he watches thus solicitously that gathered heap. Noon and afternoon go by. Still Abram watches. The sun is sinking. Amid that display of gorgeous color, the western sky is like a palace floor inlaid with rare and shining stones. The light fades out of the clouds. The shadows deepen. The night-winds blow cool. The stars peep out of the sky. Abram sleeps. Wearied after his vigils, faithfully watching there by that strangely gathered heap, Abram falls into a profound slumber. A darkness settles about him, grows denser, blacker. In the midst of it a serious voice is heard, that of the omniscient Jehovah proclaiming that Abram's seed shall be servants in a strange land four hundred years. Looking from hilly Canaan down upon the flat Nile-lands, what if childless Abram could have seen his descendants toiling in Egypt's slave-gangs, bending under the lash of the task-master by day, at night crowding in their slave-huts and shrinking before the cruel toil of the morrow!

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



DIRECTIONS. Draw very faintly an oblong square, say eighteen inches wide and twenty-four inches long. Half way across the bottom line make a mark. Commence at the upper corner, and draw the sides of the shield, ending each side at the mark just made on the bottom line. The upper part of the shield is made by drawing a curved line under the top of the square. Erase the lines of the square.

FOR COLORS. Draw the shield with white, shaded with blue or purple. The letters on the shield should be of some bright color.

Here is a simple little acrostic exercise that may be written on the board in answer to questions:

FEAR NOT,
ABRAM,
I AM
THY
HELPER.

1. The assurance. 2. To whom? 3. By whom? (I AM. The name of Jehovah.) 4. A personal assurance. 5. A help in time of need. Lastly, *Faith*, running through it all.

B. C. 1898.]

LESSON VIII. ABRAHAM PLEADING FOR SODOM.

[Feb. 20.]

Gen. 18. 23-33. [Commit to memory verses 23-25.]



23 And A'bra-ham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?

24 Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city; wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein?

25 That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked; and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

26 And the LORD said, If I find in Sod'om fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.

27 And A'bra-ham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes:

28 Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five?

And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it.

29 And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do it for forty's sake.

30 And he said unto him, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do it, if I find thirty there.

31 And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for twenty's sake.

32 And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake.

33 And the LORD went his way, as soon as he had left communing with A'bra-ham: and A'bra-ham returned unto his place.

General Statement.

For fifteen years after that night when the fire and the smoke appeared as tokens of the covenant of God, Abram dwelt in his tent under the oaks of Mamre, at peace with his neighbors and in fellowship with his God. Twice during those years God appeared to him. On the first appearance the covenant was renewed, Abram received a new name, *Abraham*, "father of a multitude," and the promise was given him that Sarah, his aged wife, should have a son, who was to bear the

name Isaac. The second manifestation was in a different form, and with a different message. Three men came to his tent-door and were received by the patriarch with becoming hospitality. A feast was spread for them under the shady branches of the oak before his tent, and the chief stood while they partook of the food. Once more the promise of a child by Sarah was renewed, and then two of the three heavenly visitors went on their way down the mountain side

toward Sodom and the other cities in the plain. The third, who showed the tokens of divinity, and spoke as only God could speak, remained for a few moments, and told the patriarch that his errand was to visit the cities of the plain, and see their deeds. Abraham knew full well that such a visit must be only the precursor of their doom. The friend of God, he was therefore a friend to his fellow-men, and sought to stay the sword of destruction. History has rarely related such a story of intercession as that offered by

Abraham in behalf of the guilty and doomed cities. The justice of the Almighty is invoked not to destroy a city in which fifty righteous men may perhaps be found. When that prayer is answered, the appeal is made for forty-five righteous, and then for forty, until at last God promises to sheathe his sword of vengeance if even ten righteous men can be found within the walls of Sodom. Not even faith can go farther, and Abraham turns back to his tent, while the Divine Man goes on his way toward the devoted city.

Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verse 23. And Abraham. Hitherto in our lessons the name of the patriarch has been *Abram*, "high father;" but after the covenant God appeared to him again, and changed his name to Abraham, "father of a multitude," expressive of the nations which were destined to descend from him. **Drew near.** Of the three heavenly beings in human form who had appeared to Abraham two had gone on their way toward the plain of Jordan; but the third, who is spoken of as "the Lord" (ver. 17), remained, and to him Abraham now addressed himself. This Being has been regarded by evangelical commentators as the pre-incarnate Son of God. **Wilt thou also destroy.** Here as everywhere Abraham appears far in advance of his time. The ancient monuments and records show everywhere a brutal insensibility to the suffering and sorrow of others, especially of other nations. But Abraham shows a deep and broad sympathy with men as men. (1) *Let us feel for others and have an interest in their troubles.* **The righteous with the wicked.** When judgment comes as a result of natural law, as by an earthquake or war, all classes are involved in a common destruction, and we must wait for a future life to disclose the compensation to the righteous for their present suffering. But when its purpose is the especial penalty of sin, exemption may justly be claimed for the righteous. (2) *We may be sure that at some time the people of God will obtain an abundant recompense for all their trials.*

24. Peradventure there be fifty righteous. (3) *The goodly man is generous, and hopes the best for his race.* **Wilt thou also destroy.** Abraham sees but two alternatives, the destruction of the whole city, or its preservation. He does not consider, perhaps does not choose to consider, that the righteous few may be preserved while the many wicked are destroyed.

25. That be far from thee. In the Hebrew a word expressing detestation as abominable; rendered in the Greek version by the word which in the New Testament is translated "God forbid." **That the righteous should be as the wicked.** There is a sentiment of justice in the human mind which demands that the right-doer receive a different dealing from the evil-doer. **Judge of all the earth do right.** From human conceptions of justice we may reason upward to the divine, and believe that if there is a God he is just and will do right. (4) *If God is just, who can live without alarm?* (5) *Only the man who trusts to a Redeemer, and not to his own righteousness.*

26. In Sodom. There is great uncertainty concerning the location of Sodom and the other cities of the plain. The old expositors supposed that they were

on the south of the Dead Sea; but the recent writers incline to a situation on the north. **Fifty righteous.** God knew to a man just how many good and how many evil there were in that doomed city. (6) *And so God beholds the city or village in which you live. Spare all the place for their sakes.* The world knows not how great is its debt to the "remnant" of righteous men in it. A few good men in a community will suffice to turn the scale from condemnation to acceptance. (7) *Are you helping to save the world or to destroy it?*

27. Abraham answered. How intimate the fellowship that ventures thus to present plea after plea to the King of heaven! (8) *God loves to have us come boldly to a throne of grace. Which am but dust and ashes.* The nearer Abraham draws to God the more deeply does he realize his distance from him. "He is dust at first, and ashes at last."—*Murphy.*

28. There shall lack five. Since God has already conceded so much it would seem easy for him to concede even more. As Abraham has received one gracious answer, he is emboldened to seek another. (9) *Every answer to prayer is a new call to prayer.* **I will not destroy it.** God is more anxious to save men than to destroy them, and will hold back the sword as long as possible.

29, 30. Yet again. The example of Abraham encourages us "always to pray and not to faint." **Forty found there.** Abraham's plea was for the righteous, but his aim was, if possible, to save the wicked. (10) *The most faithful follower of God will be the most ardent lover of men.* **Let not the Lord be angry.** God is never angry when his saints plead for sinners. **There shall thirty.** From the readiness of Jehovah to meet his petition, and from his own knowledge of the people, Abraham fears that not even forty good men can be found in the accursed cities.

31, 32. Twenty found there. We can see the good man's heart sinking, as answer after answer comes to his prayer. **Yet but this once.** He felt that there must be some limit even to the divine mercy. **Not destroy it for ten's sake.** Not ten upright men to be found in a city! Not even Abraham would dare to ask that such a sink of iniquity be spared. The generations to come would be better for its destruction.

33. The Lord went his way. This divine Being, who is addressed as God, receives the honor of God, and speaks as God, was no other than he who afterward was born as the Son of Mary. **Communicating with Abraham.** We know not whether God's willingness or Abraham's prayer reached its end the sooner. **Returned unto his place.** The tent near Mamre, afterward Hebron, in the south of Palestine.

HOME READINGS.

- M.* Abraham pleading for Sodom. Gen. 18. 23-33.
Tu. The intercession of Judah. Gen. 44. 14-34.
W. The intercession of Moses. Exod. 32. 11-35.
Th. The intercession of Samuel. 1 Sam. 7. 1-12.
F. The intercession of David. 2 Sam. 24. 10-25.
S. The intercession of Christ. John 17. 1-26.
S. The intercession of the Spirit. Rom. 8. 15-28.

GOLDEN TEXT.

In wrath remember mercy. Hab. 3. 2.

LESSON HYMN. 8, 7, d.

Hymnal, No. 728.

What a Friend we have in Jesus,
 All our sins and griefs to bear,
 What a privilege to carry
 Every thing to God in prayer!
 O what peace we often forfeit,
 O what needless pain we bear,

All because we do not carry
 Every thing to God in prayer!

TIME.—1898 B. C.

PLACE.—Plains of Mamre near Hebron.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The power of prayer.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. The Doom of Sodom.

What mention of Sodom has there been in Genesis previous to this lesson?

Whenever mentioned, what character has always been given it?

What two different views do commentators hold concerning the site of Sodom and Gomorrah? (Consult any "Dictionary of the Bible," or ask your teacher.)

What was God's purpose concerning Sodom?

In what words did God reveal to Abraham the doom of Sodom? ver. 20, 21.

How many angels had been present during this interview with Abraham? ver. 2.

How many left him to go to Sodom?
Do you think that Abraham's prayer was addressed to this third person, who evidently remained?
Give a reason for your answer.

2. The Prayer of Abraham.

What was the purpose of Abraham's prayer?
What was the ground of his prayer? ver. 23, and first clause ver. 25.

How many times was the prayer repeated?
What were two remarkable characteristics of this prayer?

What attribute of God for the first time is mentioned in this prayer?

Is there any evidence that Abraham thought it would be unjust for God to destroy Sodom?

What is the claim made by those who advocate universal salvation?

What wonderful exhibition of the divine long-suffering and mercy is shown in the answers to this prayer?

What does the awful sequel show in regard to Sodom?

Practical Teachings.

Here was a man whose righteous life made him as free to talk with God as with his friend. Righteousness always brings nearness to God.

Here was a prayer which absolutely forgot to ask any thing for itself.

True prayer is always unselfish.

This prayer was based on Abraham's desire that the God whom he loved might not be in the least shade unjust.

The true prayer always seeks to glorify God.

Here was the spirit, though not the words, of "Hallowed be thy name."

The lesson of the certain doom that awaits the unrepentant sinner must not be forgotten. *Let us not forget it.*

Hints for Home Study.

1. Compare this prayer with the prayer of Moses. Compare carefully, and write down the particulars in which they agree and in which they differ.

2. Find why the chronologists place 1898 B. C. as the date for this occurrence.

3. Find how many conversations the Lord had held with Abraham up to this time.

4. Write a list of ten things which the story of Abraham, so far as told, has shown concerning his character.

5. Learn thoroughly the story of his life up to this time so that you can tell it quickly.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. The Doom of Sodom.

Why had God resolved to destroy Sodom?

To whom did he reveal his purpose?

Why was Abraham informed?

What hope was there that Sodom might be spared?

2. The Prayer of Abraham.

To whom did Abraham offer his prayer?

For whose sake did he plead for the city?

What was his first plea?

What answer did he receive?

For the lack of what number did he next make a plea?

For the sake of how many did he next pray?

To how few did he finally reduce his request?

What was the Lord's answer?

What happened when Abraham stopped praying?

What does James say about a righteous man's prayer? James 5. 16.

What reward had Abraham's prayer in this case? Gen. 19. 29.

What prayer for a sinner does the Golden Text suggest?

Teachings of the Lesson.

What are we taught in this lesson—

1. Concerning God's justice?

2. Concerning God's mercy?

3. Concerning God's love?

Hints for Home Study.

Learn when Moses and David each prayed that the innocent might not suffer with the guilty.

Why did Abraham stop his plea with the number ten?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

What did God reveal to Abraham? The destruction of Sodom and the cities of the plain.

Why was he going to destroy them? Because of their sins.

Of what did Abraham remind God? Of his promise to save the righteous from the destruction of the wicked. (Repeat the Golden Text.)

What did he ask of him? That he would spare Sodom if there were fifty righteous men in it.

What did God promise if fifty good men were found? To save the whole city for their sake.

What did Abraham ask again? That it be spared if forty-five good men were found.

What was God's answer? "I will not destroy it."

What did Abraham then pray? That God would spare it if only forty could be found.

How did God answer? He was still willing.

How many times did Abraham pray for Sodom? Six times.

What was his last prayer? That it might be spared if there were ten good people in it.

What was God's answer? "I will not destroy it for ten's sake."

What did this show? God's willingness to save.

What do we learn from this lesson? That God hears and answers the prayers of his people.

Who are his people? Those who love and obey him.

Words with Little People.

Do you ever pray as earnestly as Abraham did?

As unselfishly? For yourself?

As humbly? For your friends?

As boldly? For your enemies?

Remember God loves to hear and answer prayer.

"He delighteth in mercy."

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. What was the character of Sodom, where Lot, Abraham's nephew, lived? **It was a very wicked city.**

2. What purpose did God reveal to Abraham? **To destroy the city of Sodom.**

3. What was Abraham's prayer to God? **To spare the city.**

4. Upon what condition did God promise to spare Sodom? **If ten righteous were in it.**

5. What prayer to God is contained in the Golden Text? **"In wrath," etc.**

6. What does this lesson teach us? **To pray earnestly, boldly, and perseveringly.**

TEXTS AT CHURCH.

Morning Text.....

Evening Text.....

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

An Example in Prayer.

I. A RIGHTEOUS MAN'S PRAYER.

Abraham drew near and said. v. 23.

"I know him." Gen. 18. 19.

"Prayer of a righteous man." James 5. 16.

II. AN INTERCEDING PRAYER.

Will thou also destroy? v. 23-25.

"Prayers... be made for all men." 1 Tim. 2. 1.

"We have an advocate." 1 John 2. 1.

III. A BOLD PRAYER.

Judge of all the earth do right? v. 25.

"Come boldly unto the throne." Heb. 4. 16.

"Boldness and access with confidence." Eph. 3. 12.

IV. A HUMBLE PRAYER.

Which am but dust and ashes. v. 27.

"A man of unclean lips." Isa. 6. 5.

"Humble themselves... will I hear." 2 Chron. 7. 14.

V. A PERSEVERING PRAYER.

Peradventure there shall lack five. v. 28.

I will speak but this once. v. 32.

"Always to pray, and not to faint." Luke 18. 1.

VI. A SUCCESSFUL PRAYER.

I will not... for ten's sake, v. 32.

"Thou hast heard.... the humble," Psa. 10. 17.

"Call and the Lord shall answer," Isa. 58. 9.

THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

Intercessory Prayer.

1. Sinners need some one to plead with God for them as Abraham pleaded for wicked Sodom, for even less wickedness than theirs deserves and receives God's wrath.

2. He who is to plead with God for the guilty must himself be righteous. We have an advocate who is even more acceptable with God than was Abraham, even Christ the righteous.

3. Our Advocate is nearer to God than was Abraham. He is God's own Son, who is sure of acceptance with him.

4. Our Advocate loves us more than Abraham loved the people for whom he prayed. He loves us more than father or mother, and he loves us even though we may be sinners. See Eph. 2. 4, 5.

5. Our Advocate offers for us a constant pleading; while Abraham's intercession was limited and brief. "He ever liveth to make intercession for us."

6. Abraham's intercession for Sodom was in vain, because its people would not turn from their sins. So Christ's advocacy only benefits those who will accept his mercy and receive his salvation.

Berean Methods.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Call attention to the change of name from *Abraham* to *Abraham*. This will open the way to the connecting history, the visit of the angels, etc.... Draw a map, and show the two views of Sodom's location, but do not waste time in discussion... Show the traits of Abraham's character as presented in this lesson, especially two, his prayerful spirit and his love for men, even though they were of another race and were wicked....

We find in this lesson an example of prayer; notice its characteristics in the Analytical and Biblical Outline.... We too need an advocate, for we too are sinners; show how Abraham in this lesson stands as a type of Christ.... Why did not Abraham's intercession save Sodom? And under what circumstances will Christ's intercession fail to benefit us? Find in the Bible other instances of intercessory prayer, as of Judah for Benjamin, Moses for Israel, Samuel, Christ on the cross, and Stephen.

Songs from the Epworth Hymnal.

- 109. Depth of mercy.
- 165. What a Friend we have in Jesus!
- 169. Arise, my soul, arise.
- 184. Safe in the arms of Jesus.
- 198. From every stormy wind that blows.
- 199. Sweet hour of prayer.
- 200. Lord, at thy mercy-seat.
- 253. Rescue the perishing.

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. *God a Pitying Father.*

INTRODUCTORY. Tell briefly the story of the wicked cities of the plain. Get all the information concerning them that you can find, even though you may use but little of it. The more one knows about the seemingly unimportant details of a lesson, the better he will teach it. Tell vividly the story of the visit of the angels to

Abraham, explaining why his name had been changed. Tell that Abraham was greatly troubled, because he was afraid that Lot and his family would be destroyed with wicked Sodom, and speak of the danger people are in who choose to make their home with people who deny God.

Print "Help" on the board. Tell story of three little boys who were left to keep house out on the prairie, and how the house got on fire. The two older boys were brave and put out the fire. When they told the story to papa, and he asked, "What did you do, Robbie?" the little fellow said, "Why, papa, I just prayed." Did Robbie help? Yes, and in the same way that Abraham did. Abraham prayed, not for himself, but for his nephew Lot, who had chosen to live among wicked people because life looked easy and pleasant there, and God heard him, as he always hears those who pray earnestly and unselfishly.



First Abraham asked the Lord to spare Sodom if there were found fifty righteous men in the city. And God answered that he would. Then Abraham, afraid that there were not even fifty good men in Sodom, kept asking for a smaller and smaller number, until the Lord promised him that he would not destroy the city if ten good men were found there. This teaches that God not only hears us when we pray, but that if we will wait and listen he will answer so that we will know it.

Print after the word help, "As God helps us." Show how we depend upon God every day for help, and what would befall us if he were careless or indifferent about helping us. He wants each child of his to be a "helper." Tell of ways in which we can help—by kind words, by good deeds, by a cheerful, contented spirit, by patience in trouble, by a forgiving spirit, etc. Tell how children can help on the cause of missions by saving their pennies and by earning pennies. Give an account of some mission band and their work, if you know one. If not, form one, and be prepared for the next opportunity of this kind!

Teach that the very best way one can help is by loving, believing prayer, which leads straight to work. God hears and will work when we can do nothing, but we must be ready to work as we pray, if there is work for us to do.

Lesson Word-Pictures.

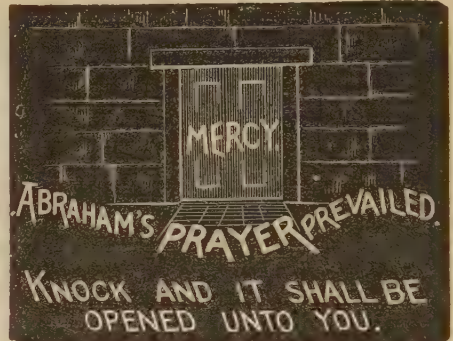
Who are those hurrying along the hot, dusty way to Sodom, wicked city of the plain? Two men? No, a celestial vision, keen, far-reaching, is in their faces; celestial strength and swiftness are in their feet. The High Court of the Almighty is to sit in Sodom. No bribe can blind it; no cunning can cheat it; no power can palsy the decision of the two judges hastening toward Sodom's guilty gates. But look back at that higher land near the road-side. The man watching there is Abraham, who has just been astonished, alarmed, bewildered, by the announcements of the Divine Presence still lingering mysteriously near him. Sodom is to be visited! Sodom is to be tried! Abraham knows what the verdict will be, and how sure and swift will be the penalty! There he stands, looking off. He can see that wicked city of the plain. Wall and tower rise up amid the hazy, purple air. He can imagine the people clustered at the gates or jostling in the narrow streets, and all unconcerned because the merchandise of hell every-where is shamelessly bought and sold. Would they be as careless if they knew the

Judge was at the door, that the Great Court was about to sit, that eyes not to be blindfolded or turned away would look the culprit through and through? Ah, there is Lot, Abram's nephew. Did he dream that Sodom was soon to stand at God's great judgment-seat? And yet there are the judicial angels in the road, hastening toward Sodom. Abraham ceases to look. He turns away. He can only pray. It may be the keen-sighted judges will find even in Sodom enough righteousness to save it. Will God slay the righteous with the wicked? Abraham bows his head. He covers his face with his hands. For fifty, O, for the fifty righteous that may be in Sodom, he pleads, beseeching God to spare the city! And the answer is, yes, for fifty. Perhaps Abraham rises, turns toward the city, and sees the angels of judgment still traveling in the highway. The space for Sodom's repentance is narrowing. The Divine Visitation is nearer now to the guilty gates. Abraham again is bowing and praying. Will not God spare for the sake of forty-five? Yes. For forty's sake? Yes. For thirty? Yes. For twenty? Yes. Abraham may have risen once more, and turns his face toward the threatened, guilty city. Still rise in the warm and purple air, Sodom's walls and towers. The sky above it gives no hint of storm; the ground below it sounds no warning of approaching wrath. And yet, there are the angels, with vision keen and feet no power can turn back, drawing nearer and nearer and nearer to the city. The space for salvation is contracting. Abraham bows once more. Let not God be angry. Will he not spare for the sake of ten? Abraham waits. The angels still are hastening on. Guilty Sodom still is there in the plain. The answer thrills the soul of the bowed suppliant: "I will not destroy it for ten's sake!" Abraham rises. Does he look around? The Divine

Presence has withdrawn. The angels—can they be seen along the line of the dusty way? They too may be gone, and can Sodom, corrupt and still corrupting, be saved from its fate? Where are the ten that will ransom it?

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



Here is represented the door of divine mercy. It will open to one who will plead for entrance. Like Abraham one must "draw near," and knock with an assurance of faith. Come to God in the same spirit. Abraham's prayer prevailed because it was persistent, and was of great faith and humility. "Knock and it shall be opened unto you."

ABRAHAM'S INTERCESSION
FOR SODOM FOR SINNERS
FOR THE SAKE OF
THE RIGHTEOUS, HIS SACRIFICE,
NOT TO SHIELD, BUT TO SAVE
THE WICKED.

B. C. 1898.]

LESSON IX. DESTRUCTION OF SODOM.

[Feb. 27.]

Gen. 19. 15-26. [Commit to memory verses 15, 16.]



15 And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.

16 And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him; and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.

17 And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad; that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.

18 And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord: 19 Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou

hast showed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest someevil take me, and I die:

20 Behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and I die a little one: O, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live.

21 And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken.

22 Haste thee, escape thither: for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zo'ar.

23 The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zo'ar.

24 Then the LORD rained upon Sod'om and upon Go-mor'rah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven:

25 And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.

26 But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

General Statement.

While Abraham was at prayer upon the heights of Hebron, other scenes were enacted in the Jordan valley. The two heavenly beings went on their way toward Sodom, and were there received by Lot, who still retained a measure of his godly character in the midst of wickedness. The two divine messengers were eye-witnesses of the crimes of the inhabitants of the city, and gave to Lot and his family warning of approaching danger. But his married or betrothed children were so fascinated with the place that it was impossible to induce them to leave, and Lot himself was dazed at the message. At last he was dragged out

of the city, as if by force. His deliverers directed him to the mountains, as the only place of safety, but Lot could not resolve to face their unknown dangers. He pleaded that the smallest of the cities might be exempted from the destruction, but his plea was for himself, and not, like Abraham's prayer, for the people. His petition was granted; and as the sun rose upon the vale Lot entered within the walls of the village. Then the fiery hail descended upon the plain, and the four cities—Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim—were swept away in their iniquity, an image of the sudden judgment which shall one day fall upon a guilty world.

Lot's wife lingered too long upon the plain, was overtaken by the sulphurous storm, and her body, crusted over with the spray, long stood like a monument. Such was Lot's reward for his choice of earthly gain—

his possessions lost, his family broken up, his own character tainted by the worldly atmosphere around him, and his whole life an utter failure.

Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verse 15. When the morning. The early dawn of the morning is here referred to, since the destruction of the city took place at sunrise. **Ver. 23. The angels.** Two of the three angelic beings in human form who had visited Abraham on the day before. Their treatment by the Sodomites is related in the earlier verses of the chapter. **Lot.** He was the son of Haran, Abraham's older brother, who died before the migration from Chaldaea. His character lacked the strong faith and nobility of Abraham, but he is spoken of by St. Peter as a righteous man. He became the ancestor of the Moabites and Ammonites, on the east of the Dead Sea. **Thy two daughters.** From the previous verses we learn that Lot had other daughters married to men of Sodom who perished in the destruction of the city. (1) *Here is a hint to parents concerning the danger of worldly associations for their children. Lest thou be consumed.* (2) *This world is a Sodom, doomed to destruction, and he that is wise will escape from it.*

16. While he lingered. Still clinging to his home, his property, and his associations in the city. (3) *How often do the ties of earth hold men back from heaven! The men laid hold.* They saw, as he could not see, that the danger was real; they beheld the sulphurous cloud overhanging the city. (4) *Could we but see how real heaven is and hell is we would be more earnest in persuading men to be saved. The Lord being merciful.* He showed his mercy by severity and sternness toward Lot, compelling him to leave the city. (5) *God is often most merciful when he strips men of their earthly possessions. Set him without the city.* It was not more than a village, since the locality will not admit of five large cities. (6) *Fortunate is that man who escapes from Sodom, though it be with loss of all things!*

17. He said. We notice here a change of the person: not as before "they," but "he." It would appear that the Divine Being who had previously spoken with Abraham and answered his prayer just now made his appearance upon the scene, and assumed the direction. **Escape for thy life.** Though out of the city, Lot and his family were not out of danger while remaining in the plain. He that would be saved must keep entirely out of temptation and of danger. (7) *Note the application of this principle to the reformed drinker and the penitent sinner. Neither stay thou in all the plain.* The very plain which Lot had chosen years before on account of its beauty and fertility. **Escape to the mountain.** The high range east of the Dead Sea, known as the mountains of Moab, Mount Abarim, and Nebo. (8) *Let us be grateful that we can fly to a mountain of grace where no storms of wrath can reach us.*

18. Lot said unto them. To the two angels, or perhaps to the three heavenly beings, among whom he saw that One was the principal. **Oh, not so.** Notice the contrast between the prayers of Abraham and of Lot; one for others, the other for himself. **My Lord.** Here not a recognition of divinity, but of superiority.

19. Thy servant hath found grace. (9) *The greatest grace of God is shown in his saving men from wrath and adopting them as his children. Magnified thy mercy.* (10) *Great mercies may become the ground of asking for still greater. I cannot escape to the mountain.* From the terror of his mind, the difficulty of the ascent, and the dangers of robbers and wild beasts. Lot needed more of Abraham's mighty faith in God. (11) *He who sends us to the mountain will take care of us there.*

20. This city is near. He referred to Bela, afterward called Zoar, "little," which some think stood on the tongue of land projecting into the Dead Sea. There is no certainty, however, as to its location. **It is a little one.** A small village, as compared with Sodom and Gomorrah, and hence having less guilt to answer for. (12) *It is a specious plea, to put forth the smallness of one's sin. Let me escape thither.* Lot, like his nobler kinsman, intercedes for a city; but one is the prayer of generosity, the other of love.

21. I have accepted thee. God does not rebuke him for presumption, but mercifully grants his request, to show both the power of a righteous man's prayer and his influence to save others, and also to teach him by experience that God's plan of safety was wiser than his own. (13) *How gently the Lord deals with the imperfections of his people! I will not overthrow this city.* One righteous man thus was the means of preserving many lives. So the Lord said to Paul, "God hath given thee all them that sail with thee." Acts 27. 24.

22. I cannot do any thing. "He could not, because he would not." Since God would save Lot, his judgments must wait upon his mercies. (14) *God's will is to save men, and he destroys only when he must. Was called Zoar.* That is, "little." The cause of its escape from the destruction gave it a new name, which it retained until the time of Moses, Deut. 34. 3.

23. The sun was risen. He was led out of Sodom at daybreak, by sunrise had reached his place of refuge, and then the fiery hail began. The destruction of the doomed cities was wrought, not at night, but in the light of day, as if for a warning to the world. **Entered into Zoar.** When Lot saw the sea of fire all around his retreat he began to distrust God's promise, and, fearing the dangers of the plain more than those of the mountain, climbed to a loftier hiding-place.

24. The Lord rained . . . from the Lord. An impressive manner of saying that the storm was not an ordinary occurrence, but by a divine purpose. **Sodom and . . . Gomorrah.** The most recent scholarship inclines, but without certainty, to the opinion that these cities stood upon the plain on the north, and not under the lagoon in the south, of the Dead Sea. **Brimstone and fire.** Words expressive of the outward appearance of the calamity, rather than its scientific cause. It may have been lightning setting on fire the bituminous deposits in the valley, or a volcanic eruption, or an event unaccountable by natural law. (15) *God has more than one weapon for the punishment of sinners.*

25. Overthrew those cities, and all the plain. Besides Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim were also destroyed. Deut. 29. 23. **That which grew.** To this day the whole region is waste, barren, and disfigured, as if smitten by the wrath of God.

26. His wife. She may have belonged to Sodom, as she is not mentioned until his residence therein. **Looked back.** Not merely with the glance of curiosity, but with the heart of longing, and, no doubt, lingering and delaying in her flight. **Became a pillar of salt.** Being caught too late in the sulphurous hail, was suffocated, burned, and covered over with the descending torrent, which rose like a monument around her form, and was covered with a saline crust, as are many objects near the Dead Sea.

HOME READINGS.

- M. The deliverance of Lot. Gen. 19. 15-29.
 Tu. The deliverance of Moses. Exod. 2. 1-10.
 W. The deliverance of Israel. Exod. 14. 19-31.
 Th. The deliverance of Rahab. Josh. 6. 11-27.
 F. The deliverance of Elisha. 2 Kings 6. 8-23.
 S. The deliverance of the apostles. Acts 5. 1-26.
 S. The deliverance of Paul and Silas. Acts 16. 22-40.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Escape for thy life. Gen. 19. 17.

LESSON HYMN. 7.

Hymnal, No. 345.

Hasten, sinner, to be wise!
 Stay not for the morrow's sun;
 Wisdom if you still despise,
 Haruer is it to be won.

Hasten, mercy to implore!
 Stay not for the morrow's sun,
 Lest thy season should be o'er
 Ere this evening's stage be run.

Hasten, sinner, to return !
Stay not for the morrow's sun,
Lest thy lamp should fail to burn
Ere salvation's work is done.

TIME.—1898 B. C. Immediately following the last lesson

PLACE.—Sodom. Gomorrah. Zoar.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The mercy of God.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. Righteous Lot.

Recall Lot's previous history. Who was he? Whence came he? How chanced he to be in Sodom? In what great danger was he when our lesson opens? What had brought Lot into this danger? To what only did he owe his escape? What evidence is furnished that he was a better man than his neighbors?

How did his name go down to remotest Scripture history? 2 Pet. 2, 7.

What had been the effect upon his character of his life in Sodom?

2. Wicked Sodom.

Where do we first learn of the wickedness of Sodom? What had been the effect of Lot's life upon Sodom?

What does the picture of these inhabitants of Sodom show as to their characters?

What comment did these sinners make on Lot's presence among them? ver. 9.

How did this terrible wickedness seem to Jesus as he compared it with the wickedness of his own times?

What evidences are there that Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed as described?

What witness of this scene has left his record that it is true?

Practical Teachings.

Lot brought all his troubles on himself; he could not call them God's righteous discipline.

They became inevitable from the day when he began pitching his tent toward Sodom.

Poor Lot! timid, cowardly, defective in faith, short-sighted, he has many followers even in the Church.

How merciful God was to Lot, and all on Abraham's account!

Will he not be much more merciful on account of his Son?

Abraham prayed once. Jesus ever liveth to make intercession.

One looked back. What a costly look that was!

Hints for Home Study.

How shall I study this lesson?

1. Recall all the directions given for study heretofore.

2. Find the evidences of Lot's belief in the word of the angels.

3. Find the evidences of his unwillingness to go.

4. In one column write five adjectives which will describe him as he was the day he left Abraham.

5. In another write five adjectives which will describe him as he was the day he left Sodom.

6. Give the cause of all this.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. Righteous Lot.

What warning did Lot receive? How was his reluctance to leaving Sodom overcome?

Why was he thus cared for? When outside the city what was he urged to do?

What did he fear that he could not do? What privilege did he ask?

What blessing came to Zoar because of Lot? Why was he urged to haste?

What is the meaning of Zoar? At what hour did Lot enter Zoar?

2. Wicked Sodom.

What doom came on Sodom? What other city shared its fate?

What portion of the country suffered at the same time?

What became of the people? What city will fare worse in the judgment than Sodom? Matt. 10, 15.

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. God's care for the righteous?
2. God's tenderness with the wayward?
3. God's anger with the wicked?

Hints for Home Study.

Find out what Peter says about Lot.
Find out what the Saviour says about Lot's family.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Who came to tell Lot of the destruction of Sodom? **Two angels.**

What did they command Lot and his family? **To leave the city.**

What did they say? (Repeat the Golden Text.) How did the angels hasten them? **They led them out by the hand.**

Where did they direct Lot to go? **To the mountain.**

Why did he object? **For fear he would not reach it in safety.**

What did this show? **His lack of faith.**

Where did he ask to stop? **In a little village on the plain.**

What was its name? **Bela, afterward called Zoar.**

What did Lot ask for Zoar? **That it might be saved.**

What was God's answer? **"I will not overthrow this city."**

What befell Sodom and Gomorrah? **Sudden destruction by fire.**

Of what was this a proof? **That God sees and punishes sin.**

How did Lot's wife disobey God? **She looked back toward Sodom.**

What punishment came upon her? **She was turned into a pillar of salt.**

Words with Little People.

Do fine clothes and worldly things ever lead you to disobey God?

Would you like to have people see all the sin in your heart?

Who does see it all? Who is able to save you from sin and the punishment that always comes with sin?

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. Who came to Sodom to warn Lot and his family? **Two angels of God.**

2. How did they show God's mercy to his family? **By dragging them out of the city.**

3. What did they say to Lot in the Golden Text? **"Escape," etc.**

4. What took place after Lot went out of Sodom? **God rained fire upon it.**

5. What came upon Lot's wife when she stopped and looked back? **She became a pillar of salt.**

6. What are we taught in this lesson? **To escape from wicked companions.**

TEXTS AT CHURCH.

Morning Text.....

Evening Text.....

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

God's Mercy and Wrath.

I. God's MERCY.

1. **Warning.** "Hastened Lot." v. 15.

"Come out of her." Rev. 18, 4.

2. **Urging.** "Laid hold." v. 16.

"Now is the day of salvation." 2 Cor. 6, 2.

3. **Guiding.** "Escape to the mountain." v. 17.

"Flee into the mountains." Matt. 24, 16.

4. **Delaying.** "Cannot do any thing." v. 22.

"How....give thee up?" Hos. 11, 3.

5. **Saving.** "The sun was risen." v. 23.

"Redeemeth the soul....servants." Psa. 34, 22.

II. God's WRATH.

1. **Its cause.** "Iniquity of the city." v. 15.

"Sin....bringeth forth death. James 1, 15.

2. **Its source.** "The Lord rained." v. 24.

"God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah." Amos

4, 11.

3. **Its manifestation.** "Fire and brimstone." v. 24.
 "Upon the wicked....fire and brimstone." Psa. 11. 6.
 4. **Its result.** "Overthrew those cities." v. 25.
 "No man shall abide there." Jer. 49. 18.
 5. **Its victim.** "His wife looked back." v. 26.
 "Remember Lot's wife." Luke 17. 31.

THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

"Remember."

1. Remember that a worldly choice is not always profitable, even in a worldly sense. Lot chose Sodom and its riches, but he lost all his riches with Sodom. A man may peril his soul for money and yet die in poverty.

2. Remember that one cannot voluntarily associate with sinners without having his character lowered. He may not become wicked, but he will become of an inferior type of character. Compare Abraham and Lot.

3. Remember that evil companionships affect the children far more than they affect their parents. Some of Lot's daughters may have perished in Sodom, because they loved its associations; his two daughters who escaped grew up to immorality, and transmitted their wickedness to their descendants. Abraham's children became the people of God; Lot's were the Ammonites and Moabites.

4. Remember that certain destruction and ruin befall those who reject God's law and do iniquity. Sodom is a picture of the world in sin; and Sodom's fate shall yet come upon the world.

5. Remember that those who delay are in danger, no less than those who reject. Lot's wife is a memorial of God's wrath upon those who put off salvation.

Berean Methods.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Review rapidly the last lesson, and call attention to the "three men," one of whom stayed with Abraham, while the other two went down to Sodom....Tell the story of the lesson, or draw it out by questions from the class....Show in Sodom the condition of sinners and their fate....Notice three privileges which Sodom enjoyed: 1.) God's grace in prosperity; 2.) God's discipline in its capture by the Elamites; 3.) God's mercy in its restoration; 4.) The presence of a righteous man—Lot; 5.) The visit of the angels of God. Notice, too, how Sodom misused its privileges....See the mixed character of Lot, and its opposite traits....Note the traits of the divine character as shown in this lesson—God's knowledge, mercy, justice, power, etc....Avoid debate on the difficulties of the lesson....What are the warnings of this event?

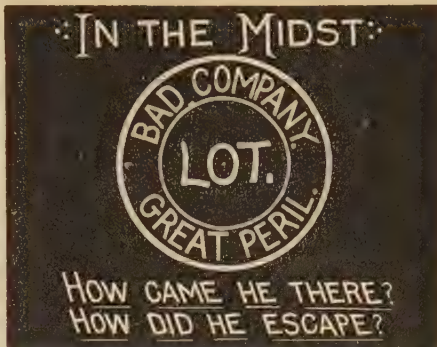
References. FREEMAN. Ver. 26: Looking behind, 17.

Songs from the Epworth Hymnal.

107. Hasten, sinner, to be wise.
 113. God calling yet.
 118. So near to the kingdom.
 170. I was a wandering sheep.
 195. Saviour, listen to our prayer.
 205. Yield not to temptation.
 208. Dare to do right.
 209. Will Jesus find us watching?
 245. Blow the trumpet.

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



DIRECTIONS. This simple design is made by attaching a string to a piece of chalk, and with them make the circle. The idea is to represent Lot as completely surrounded by evil and peril. How came he in? What was his motive? Make an open place on the left hand side for the entrance, and in answer to questions write the reasons opposite. On the other side of the circle make a way of escape by erasing a place in the line, and describe Lot's rescue. Write answers that may be given, such as prayer, intercession, faith, etc.

BLACKBOARD BIBLE READING.

ESCAPE FOR THY LIFE!

FROM SIN.

GOD IS READY TO SAVE.

Neh. 9. 17; John 3. 16; Mark 1. 15; Heb. 3. 8; Isa. 1. 18; 55. 7; Heb. 8. 12; 2 Cor. 6. 2; Luke 19. 10.

Lesson Word Pictures.

The Judge has come. Sodom has been tried, found guilty, and is to be burned up this very day. Does Sodom know it? No, it knows nothing of any coming to judgment. Last night, when the sun went down, it saw two strangers in its streets, and Lot sheltered them. Sodom heard the insane clamor of the rabble about the doors of Lot in the night, but then Sodom is used to such a bedlam, and went to sleep in the midst of it. Still asleep, and it is morning now. Still asleep, and the Judge has been here, the court has sat, and soon the doomed city will be in flames. All asleep? No, there is a stirring within the house of Lot. The men with strange faces who came last night, are crying, "Arise!" They have laid hold upon Lot, his wife, his two daughters, and would hurry them away. Sodom to be burned! Who can believe it? What sign of this can be seen? The sun is not up yet, and there are little silver stars looking down, yet shrinking, paling, as if they would veil their faces before the awful doom soon to crash upon the accursed city. There is no one traveling the streets, still shadowy, save that group—of Lot's family in the hands of the strangers eagerly hurrying them away. They go as in a dream. They cannot realize it. Their friends—how many they have left behind! The property of Lot—that must be left behind! Accursed day when he chose "all the plain" for his home! Accursed day when the tent pitched toward Sodom became a house inside its walls! And now the hour of burning has come—alas, alas! Still the city sleeps over its shame and its sin. Some one is coming though. Who is that coming to the door of yonder house? It is one of Lot's

sons-in-law, perhaps. He may be asking, "Who are these people hurrying off? That you, Lot?" "Up, get you out of this place!" Lot excitedly cries, "for the Lord will destroy this city." "Still at it, Lot? That is what you said last night, and we are all right. You are mocking." "Hurry, hurry!" cry Lot's guests, swiftly urging him on. The streets are soon echoing to the tread of a few early risers. They see the flying group and wonder. If they knew why this haste they would have no sneer for it. The sun is not up yet, but there is an orange flush to the eastern sky. The fugitives are now outside the gates. Over the open plain the morning air breathes cooler, purer. But hurry, Lot! The awful fire is coming! Hurry! "Look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain. Escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed!" To the mountain? O, if he could only find refuge in little Zoar, whose gates are close at hand, Lot is saying. The mountain is wild and lonely and hard to climb. May he not find refuge in little Zoar, right at hand? You can see his earnest, pleading face, his outstretched hands, and then he points at the little city. Yes, the fugitives may go there. The sun is up now, and its light streams over Sodom—for the last time. Did it come up bloody, its angry light full of portent? Did any one catch warning sounds above or beneath them? Did any prophet at that hour see red signs of alarm? "Lot was crazy last night," Lot's sons-in-law may say. "There is no danger." But hark! Somebody heard it, every body heard it, felt it—that awful jar to the ground, that violent rupture, coming in a moment, tearing up, shattering, bringing down, and then out burst the fearful fires of judgment! The heavens are blackened with the smoke. All the air is full of that retributive rain, a storm of fire, smoke, and ashes beating down and bursting up. But who is that lingering in the plain? Who has separated herself from Lot's little band and now looks back on the fated city? Why does she hesitate and disobey? Still stands that lonely figure on the plain, across which the storm is now hurrying. It overtakes her, envelopes her, smothers her, covers her with its folds, and there upon the plain rises a pillar in human form, symbol of her sinful revolt and a memorial of the fire-storm that has destroyed the ungodly cities of the plain.

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. *Sin Must Die.*

REVIEW. For whom did Abraham pray? What unwise choice had Lot made? Who said that Sodom must be destroyed? What did Abraham ask of God? For whose sake did he ask it.

This lesson may be presented in three pictures. Make three spaces on the board, and call them picture frames. Number them 1, 2, and 3. Print above No. 1, "The Angels' Visit." Describe Lot sitting in the gate of Sodom. Print his name in the picture frame. Tell that the two angels came in the form of noble, gracious men. Perhaps Lot did not know that they were angels, but he felt that they were men of high rank. Print "Angels" in the space, and tell how kindly Lot treated them, and how rude the wicked men of Sodom were toward them. Explain that God had sent them there to warn Lot to flee, because God knew that there were not ten righteous men in the city, and he wanted to save Lot, for Abraham's sake. Tell how the wicked Sodomites saw the angels, and wanted to harm them, and teach that sin is always afraid of being found out. Tell how the angels sent blindness upon the men of Sodom who were about to break down Lot's door and

do him harm as well as the angels. Print within the frame, "Wicked men suddenly become blind."



Print over No. 2, "Flying for Life." Give a brief but lively description of people flying before flood or fire. Tell that Lot saw no sign of destruction, but he believed the word of the Lord, and warned his wicked sons-in-law of the danger, but they would not believe him. Print

"Warning Words," in picture frame. Tell how slow Lot was to leave his home, and how the good angels had to lead him and his wife and daughters out of the city. Draw from this a lesson of God's great mercy to us when we are foolish and unbelieving. Print, "Helping Angels," and remind children that angels are near us, to watch and warn and help. Call for Golden Text, and read from Bible the remainder of verse 17.

Print over No. 3, "The City Fallen," and tell how fire fell from heaven, and a great earthquake came and destroyed the city of Sodom and all who were in it. Print "Fire from Heaven," "Shaking of the Earth," in space No. 3. Tell the fate of Lot's wife, and story "Disobedience punished." Let children tell the story briefly, by the aid of words printed in frames, and close with

Lesson for us. Sin must be destroyed. God sends his Son Jesus, his holy word, his holy angels, to warn us. Our only safety is in flying to Jesus. He is our city of refuge. If we stay in the company of sinners we shall be destroyed with them. Shall we escape?

LESSONS FOR MARCH, 1887.

MARCH 6. Abraham Offering Isaac. Gen. 22. 1-14.

MARCH 13. Jacob at Beth-el. Gen. 28. 10-22.

MARCH 20. Jacob's New Name. Gen. 32. 9-12, and 24-30.

MARCH 27. Review; Temperance Lesson, Gen. 9. 18-27; Missionary Lesson, Gen. 18. 17-26.

Lessons and Golden Texts for 1888.

[We often have inquiries during the year for the lessons for the year following. We therefore thus early in the year publish the list of lessons for 1888, that our readers may have them ready for reference at any time they choose. This is assuming that all readers of the JOURNAL preserve a file of this magazine. If they do not they ought to. We sometimes get letters of inquiry on matters which have been discussed in the JOURNAL. If a file were kept some of these inquiries would be needless.]

STUDIES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

First Quarter.

LESSON 1. JAN. 1.—HEROD AND JOHN THE BAPTIST. Matt. 14. 1-12. *Commit vs.* 10-12. GOLDEN TEXT: And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus. Matt. 14. 12.

2. JAN. 8.—THE MULTITUDE FED. Matt. 14. 13-21. *Commit vs.* 19-21. GOLDEN TEXT: Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life. John 6. 35.

3. JAN. 15.—JESUS WALKING ON THE SEA. Matt.

14. 22-26. *Commit vs.* 25-27. GOLDEN TEXT: Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. Matt. 14. 27.

4. Jan. 22.—JESUS AND THE AFFLICTED. Matt. 15. 21-31. *Commit vs.* 30, 31. GOLDEN TEXT: Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. James 5. 13.

5. Jan. 29.—PETER CONFESSING CHRIST. Matt. 16. 13-28. *Commit vs.* 15-17. GOLDEN TEXT: Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. Matt. 10. 32.

6. Feb. 5.—THE TRANSFIGURATION. Matt. 17. 1-13. *Commit vs.* 4, 5. GOLDEN TEXT: And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son; hear him. Luke 9. 35.

7. Feb. 12.—JESUS AND THE LITTLE ONES. Matt. 18. 1-14. *Commit vs.* 2-4. GOLDEN TEXT: But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven. Matt. 19. 14.

8. Feb. 19.—A LESSON ON FORGIVENESS. Matt. 18. 21-35. *Commit vs.* 21, 22. GOLDEN TEXT: And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. Matt. 6. 12.

9. Feb. 26.—THE RICH YOUNG RULER. Matt. 19. 16-26. *Commit vs.* 23-26. GOLDEN TEXT: Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Matt. 6. 24.

10. March 4.—CHRIST'S LAST JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM. Matt. 20. 17-29. *Commit vs.* 17-19. GOLDEN TEXT: The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. Matt. 20. 28.

11. March 11.—JESUS'S ENTRANCE TO JERUSALEM. Matt. 21. 1-16. *Commit vs.* 9-11. GOLDEN TEXT: Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Psa. 118. 26.

12. March 18.—THE SON REJECTED. Matt. 21. 33-46. *Commit vs.* 42-44. GOLDEN TEXT: He came unto his own, and his own received him not. John 1. 11.

13. March 25.—REVIEW; or, Temperance Lesson, Gal. 5. 16-26; or, Missionary Lesson, Psa. 2. 1-12.

Second Quarter.

LESSON 1. April 1.—THE MARRIAGE FEAST. Matt. 23. 1-14. *Commit vs.* 11-14. GOLDEN TEXT: Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. Rev. 19. 9.

2. April 8.—CHRIST'S LAST WARNING. Matt. 23. 27-39. *Commit vs.* 37-39. GOLDEN TEXT: Create in me a clean heart, O God: and renew a right spirit within me. Psa. 51. 10.

3. April 15.—CHRISTIAN WATCHFULNESS. Matt. 24. 42-51. *Commit vs.* 42-44. GOLDEN TEXT: And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch. Mark 13. 37.

4. April 22.—THE TEN VIRGINS. Matt. 25. 1-13. *Commit vs.* 10-13. GOLDEN TEXT: And they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Matt. 25. 10.

5. April 29.—THE TALENTS. Matt. 25. 14-30. *Commit vs.* 20, 21. GOLDEN TEXT: Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. Rev. 2. 10.

6. May 6.—THE JUDGMENT. Matt. 25. 31-46. *Commit vs.* 37-40. GOLDEN TEXT: And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal. Matt. 25. 46.

7. May 13.—THE LORD'S SUPPER. Matt. 26. 17-30. *Commit vs.* 26-28. GOLDEN TEXT: For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. 1 Cor. 5. 7.

8. May 20.—JESUS IN GETHSEMANE. Matt. 26. 36-46. *Commit vs.* 36-39. GOLDEN TEXT: Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered. Heb. 5. 8.

9. May 27.—PETER'S DENIAL. Matt. 26. 67-75. *Commit vs.* 73-75. GOLDEN TEXT: Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. 1 Cor. 10. 12.

10. June 3.—JESUS CRUCIFIED. Matt. 27. 33-50. *Commit vs.* 35-37. GOLDEN TEXT: He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Phil. 2. 8.

11. June 10.—JESUS RISEN. Matt. 28. 1-15. *Commit vs.* 5, 7. GOLDEN TEXT: But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. 1 Cor. 15. 20.

12. June 17.—THE GREAT COMMISSION. Matt. 28. 16-20. *Commit vs.* 18-20. GOLDEN TEXT: The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it. Psa. 68. 11.

13. June 24.—REVIEW; or, Temperance Lesson, 1 Cor. 8. 1-13; or, Missionary Lesson, Isa. 61. 4-11.

STUDIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Third Quarter.

LESSON 1. July 1.—GOD'S COVENANT WITH ISRAEL. Exod. 24. 1-12. *Commit vs.* 7, 8. GOLDEN TEXT: I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. Heb. 8. 10.

2. July 8.—THE GOLDEN CALF. Exod. 32. 15-26. *Commit vs.* 19-21. GOLDEN TEXT: Little children, keep yourselves from idols. 1 John 5. 21.

3. July 15.—GOD'S PRESENCE PROMISED. Exod. 33. 12-23. *Commit vs.* 12-14. GOLDEN TEXT: Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Matt. 28. 20.

4. July 22.—FREE GIFTS FOR THE TABERNACLE. Exod. 35. 20-29. *Commit vs.* 21, 22. GOLDEN TEXT: God loveth a cheerful giver. 2 Cor. 9. 7.

5. July 29.—THE TABERNACLE. Exod. 40. 1-16. *Commit vs.* 1-3. GOLDEN TEXT: Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them. Rev. 21. 3.

6. Aug. 5.—THE BURNT OFFERING. Lev. 1. 1-9. *Commit vs.* 4, 5. GOLDEN TEXT: The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. Isa. 53. 6.

7. Aug. 12.—THE DAY OF ATONEMENT. Lev. 16. 1-16. *Commit vs.* 16. GOLDEN TEXT: Without shedding of blood is no remission. Heb. 9. 22.

8. Aug. 19.—THE FEAST OF TABERNALES. Lev.

23. 33-44. *Commit vs.* 41-43. GOLDEN TEXT: The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous. Psa. 118. 15.

9. Aug. 26.—THE PILLAR OF CLOUD AND OF FIRE. Num. 9. 15-23. *Commit vs.* 15, 16. GOLDEN TEXT: O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me. Psa. 43. 3.

10. Sept. 2.—THE SPIES SENT INTO CANAAN. Num. 13. 17-33. *Commit vs.* 30-32. GOLDEN TEXT: Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it. Num. 13. 30.

11. Sept. 9.—THE UNBELIEF OF THE PEOPLE. Num. 14. 1-10. *Commit vs.* 2-4. GOLDEN TEXT: So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. Heb. 3. 19.

12. Sept. 16.—THE SMITTEN ROCK. Num. 20. 1-13. *Commit vs.* 7, 8. GOLDEN TEXT: They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. 1 Cor. 10. 4.

13. Sept. 23.—DEATH AND BURIAL OF MOSES. Deut. 34. 1-12. *Commit vs.* 5-7. GOLDEN TEXT: The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. Prov. 4. 18.

14. Sept. 30.—REVIEW; or, Temperance Lesson, Deut. 21. 18-21; or, Missionary Lesson, 1 Thess. 1. 1-10.

Fourth Quarter.

LESSON 1. Oct. 7.—THE COMMISSION OF JOSHUA. Josh. 1. 1-9. *Commit vs.* 8, 9. GOLDEN TEXT: Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness. Eph. 6. 14.

2. Oct. 14.—CROSSING THE JORDAN. Josh. 3. 5-17. *Commit vs.* 5, 6. GOLDEN TEXT: When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee: and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee. Isa. 43. 2.

3. Oct. 21.—THE STONES OF MEMORIAL. Josh. 4. 10-24. *Commit vs.* 20-22. GOLDEN TEXT: Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. Josh. 4. 22.

4. Oct. 28.—THE FALL OF JERICHO. Josh. 6. 1-16. *Commit vs.* 15, 16. GOLDEN TEXT: By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days. Heb. 11. 30.

5. Nov. 4.—DEFEAT AT AL. Josh. 7. 1-12. *Commit vs.* 10-12. GOLDEN TEXT: Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness. Psa. 119. 36.

6. Nov. 11.—CALEB'S INHERITANCE. Josh. 14. 5-15. *Commit vs.* 10-12. GOLDEN TEXT: Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Psa. 37. 8.

7. Nov. 18.—HELPING ONE ANOTHER. Josh. 21. 43-45, and 22. 1-9. *Commit vs.* 22. 1-4. GOLDEN TEXT: Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. Gal. 6. 2.

8. Nov. 25.—THE COVENANT RENEWED. Josh. 24. 19-28. *Commit vs.* 26-28. GOLDEN TEXT: The

Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey. Josh. 24. 24.

9. Dec. 2.—ISRAEL UNDER JUDGES. Judg. 2. 11-23. *Commit vs.* 11, 12. GOLDEN TEXT: Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. Heb. 3. 12.

10. Dec. 9.—GIDEON'S ARMY. Judg. 7. 1-8. *Commit vs.* 2, 3. GOLDEN TEXT: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. Zech. 4. 6.

11. Dec. 16.—DEATH OF SAMSON. Judg. 16. 21-31. *Commit vs.* 29, 30. GOLDEN TEXT: Great men are not always wise. Job 32. 9.

12. Dec. 23.—RUTH'S CHOICE. Ruth 1. 16-22. *Commit vs.* 16-18. GOLDEN TEXT: Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Ruth 1. 16.

13. Dec. 30.—REVIEW; or, Temperance Lesson, Num. 6. 1-4; or, Missionary Lesson, Psa. 67. 1-7.

Adaptability.

BY VULCAN.

You do not find it easy to adapt yourself to circumstances, especially if those circumstances are the least bit disagreeable. You have taken an unaccountable dislike to the place and people, and the dislike increases because you do not make the least effort to overcome it. The trouble is that you object to all sorts of discipline, and the Lord knows it. Therefore he is putting you through a course of treatment that will either kill or cure you. The result depends upon yourself.

It is easier to accept the situation than to fight against it. If your surroundings are not just what you would like, make the best of them. They may improve after a while, and in the meantime your pride is being disciplined—and this is an advantage to you and your friends.

The people with whom you are compelled to associate are not congenial. You cannot adapt yourself to them. Do you try? Have you ever made any attempt to find out if you had not some tastes in common? or do you hold yourself aloof with Pharisaic haughtiness? It would do you good to go down to their level. In this way you may succeed in bringing them up to a higher plane. But you hurt them and yourself by fostering an aversion, for which, in many instances, there is no reasonable excuse.

We all have the power of adapting ourselves to our circumstances, and are to blame if we do not strengthen their power by use. God puts us into a certain place for a wise purpose. We cannot change it except by a change of heart. Then all is well.

"Subservient to his will, we rest
In any place he deemeth best,
Striving some good to do, or gain,
To prove we have not lived in vain."

Tempting Trusts.

BY REV. RICHARD WHEATLEY, D.D.

WHAT is meant by this alliterative phrase is clearly seen in the light of recent events. Faith is the basis of civilized society. Confidence in men is absolutely necessary to peace, safety, and progress. No class of men is more thoroughly trusted than that composed of the avowed disciples of Christ. This is as it ought to be. All thus trusted should in all circumstances prove themselves to be worthy of confidence. No shock to the moral sentiment is more severe than that given by the defaults of trusted Christians. No wound is more painful to the Lord and Saviour than one inflicted in the house of his friends.

Society cannot exist without trust. There must be trustees of banking, insurance, and other corporations in the persons of their officers; trustees of the funds of evangelical and beneficent associations in the persons of their treasurers; trustees of church funds, Sunday-school funds, ladies' aid society, and sundry other funds; trustees of the estates of deceased persons, and of sums set apart for the necessities of the living. In any and all of these positions it is indispensable that the trustee shall do that which is "right and good in the sight of the Lord." In such case "a faithful man shall abound with blessings," Prov. 28. 20. "Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth and a foot out of joint," Prov. 25. 19.

Trustees of the property and interests of others are almost necessarily selected on the assumption of their honesty, ability, and faithfulness; and should for that additional reason feel under special obligation to justify the trust reposed in them. More than mere money is intrusted to their care. The solicitude, the self-sacrifice, the industry of bread-winners, as represented by accumulations, is in their hands. The hopes and yearnings of parents, relatives, and friends are put into their care. The comfort and even the lives of adults, the education, the hope, the future of children are placed under their protection. The reliance of the distressed, the relief of the suffering, the charities of the benevolent, the good name of the Church, and the honor of the Master seek shelter under their integrity. To betray a solemn trust is a crime that involves the essence of many other crimes, and that reveals shocking moral depravation. To be truly faithful to it is to be established in righteousness, and to merit an enviable reputation like that of Daniel, in whom only "innocency was found." Dan. 6. 22.

Satan is morally certain to make the custody of trusts the foundation of solicitation to evil. Even the twelve apostles were not exempt from temptation. Judas, "who had the bag and bare what was put therein," yielded to it, and "was a thief," John 12. 6. The qualities that induce selection as trustee are ordinarily those which assure business success. Here a bank cashier owes his position not alone to influential friends, but to industry,

probity, business capacity, participation in moral and social reforms, and active membership in the Church of Christ. His large salary is shrewdly invested. Prospects of affluence dawn upon him. He is ambitious of reputation as an able and wealthy financier; of social position, deference, power, and command of all the means of pleasure. Progress is too slow. He forgets that "he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent." Prov. 28. 20. His mind is occupied with projects of realizing ambition. He is unheedful of the voice which says: "Labor not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom," Prov. 23. 4. "The love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness." 1 Tim. 6. 10, 11. He embarks in speculation—perhaps succeeds—more probably fails. Better were it if he failed at first, and utterly. Initial gains are often ruinous. The gambler's passion increases with the extent of his ventures. He is in straits for money. "Use some of your trust funds," the tempter suggests. The idea is rejected with loathing, but it recurs again and again, and with greater force as he persists in his schemes. "What harm would come of it?" he asks himself. "I only borrow the money, and am sure to replace it. Nobody will be any wiser, and I shall be the richer. Besides, if the worst comes to the worst, my bondsmen will recoup the loss to the owners." When any trustee has so far yielded to the devil as to make this course of reasoning his own, his downfall is not distant. What right has he to use another's money or property for his own selfish purposes, without the owner's consent? Is he sure that the misappropriated funds will be replaced? And, whether they be or not, is he not aware that the act is of the essence of theft—that it is embezzlement, fraud, and a penal offense? What warrant has he for subjecting his bondsmen to the possibility of unjust loss, and ungratefully and wickedly abusing their confidence in his firmness and probity?

Again, the president of one or more corporate institutions enjoys celebrity as one who brings things to pass, as making hitherto unprofitable ventures pay, as accomplishing whatever he undertakes. He is industrious, frugal, prompt in payment, generous, and of good repute as a Church member. Distinction, deference, power, all that constitutes the "pride of life," is his. Unconsciously he loves this better than he loves his Lord. He uses the funds of one company to assist the failing fortunes of another. He risks, and that without authority, the property of one to build up that of another. He is personally interested, but soothes conscience with the statement that it is for others rather than himself that these irregularities are committed. Irregularities? They are criminalities—abuses of trust—defalcations that may bring regret and shame, flight and ruin. Their

real character may appear in the light of subsequent developments. The fact that some have dared to use trust funds for their own purposes, or in the interest of parties other than the owners, without the owners' legal consent, and have profited by the transaction without loss to the trust, does not affect in the least the nature of the act. It is utterly indefensible on any ground of natural or Christian ethics, is an immorality, and an offense that, in the absence of true repentance, entails spiritual wreck and eternal ruin.

"The way of the transgressor is hard." Conscience cannot be utterly choked. Fears are in the way. Detection stares him in the face. The skeleton of crime is with him by night and by day. It lays its ghastly head on his pillow, grins at his luxurious table, rattles at his heels on the way to office and church, and, all unseen as it is, grimly asserts that its full and visible embodiment is only a question of time. The fatal day comes at last. Obligations clamor for satisfaction. Ingenuity fails to put them off any longer. Money can neither be borrowed nor embezzled. Inquisitive creditors examine the books. False entries, "cooked" accounts, defalcations, ranging all the way between hundreds and millions, are discovered. The police are called in, and the trusted and envied multitudes are reduced to the level of a common malefactor. All pity him while they condemn him. He suffers, and his family suffers, but so do others and their families. Making haste to be rich, he has plunged himself into poverty and peril. Prostrate with anguish and fear, he is ready to welcome the thieves' sanctuary across the St. Lawrence, or even the grave, as a shelter from the curses or tears of those whom his own selfishness and pride have brought into straitness or penury.

"Be not high-minded, but fear." None is exempt from temptation. Let not the holder of trust-funds use them to any extent at all for his own selfish purposes. The treasurer of Sunday-school, missionary society, or church, whose holdings never amount to hundreds, is as sure to be tempted as the custodian of millions. Resent and reject the temptation, and if really too weak to resist it, then resign in favor of some one stronger.

Christianity is not to be blamed for these sad delinquencies. Infidelity will brassy claim that it is, but in so far as infidelity is intelligent it knows that the assertion is a bare-faced lie. Infidelity alone is to blame. It infused unbelief, paralyzed prayer, blinded watchfulness, and guided the erring hands. Christianity is always pure, true, honest, and faithful.

At Home.

... While attending the anniversary of the Sunday-school department at St. Louis, in November last, one of the editors saw a full set of the SUNDAY-SCHOOL JOURNAL from 1872 to 1885, handsomely bound, in the library of J. A. Field, Esq., superintendent of the Goode Avenue Methodist

Episcopal Sunday-school. It was a pleasure to meet such an evidence of an active and abiding interest in Sunday-school instruction. A set of these volumes embraces a commentary upon the most important parts of the Bible, and is very useful to the student. We are informed that Mr. Field has been offered five hundred dollars for his file. Some of the earlier numbers of the JOURNAL are now exceedingly scarce, and command a high price. We know of very few complete sets in private libraries. Many teachers greatly regret that they failed to preserve the back numbers, and are now seeking to replace them.

... Every efficient secretary or librarian in a Sunday-school is apt to have his own preference in plans of registration. We have recently examined the "Excelsior System," published by Cranston & Stowe, Cincinnati and Chicago, and consider it to be one of the best. It is equally adapted for the secretary, librarian, superintendent, and teacher, and includes books and cards for every department, embracing even an envelope for the contribution. Send to the publishers for a circular of explanation.

... In one of our churches in St. Louis there has been held every Sunday for the last ten years an early morning prayer-meeting, commencing at four o'clock. We learn from the pastor that the attendance varies from fifty to a hundred and fifty. That implies early rising, and considerable self-denial. Such a meeting would rejoice the soul of John Wesley were he living, for he was fond of early rising and of early worship.

... Dr. Harrison, in his highly interesting work, "The High-Churchman Disarmed," notice of which appeared in our January number, states that the Baptists of Virginia at one time had an episcopal form of church government. After several years of discussion the General Association of Virginia Baptists in 1776 organized an Episcopal Church and elected three bishops. But the Baptists did not take kindly to this form of government, and after an experiment of a year the bishops were retired from office, and the old congregational system was resumed.

... Very few superintendents recognize the value of the tract as an aid to the Sunday-school. It would be a good plan to examine the tract-catalogue and select a good tract for each department in the school, to be distributed occasionally at the close of the session. For example, there are the tracts in the Temperance Series, any one of which would be read with interest by every scholar; there are tracts for boys and girls; the Oxford League and Home College Series, etc. These latter might be distributed at the close of a young people's social gathering. Talk with your pastor, and see if there is not a way whereby you can obtain tracts for distribution in your school. A small sum of money will suffice to buy a great many tracts. Orders may be sent to Phillips & Hunt, New

York, or Cranston & Stowe, Cincinnati. Or, if a collection has been taken in the church for our Tract Society, the pastor may obtain a grant of tracts to the value of one half the collection.

Thoughts for the Quiet Hour.

—SIMPLICITY and purity are the two wings by which a man is lifted up above all earthly things. Simplicity is in the intention; purity in the affection. Simplicity tends to God; purity apprehends and tastes him.—*Thomas à Kempis*.

—A great deal of time is contracted in opportunity—which is the flower of time.—*Whicheote*.

—Meditation is the soul's perspective glass; whereby, in her long remove, she discerneth God, as if he were nearer hand.—*Feltham*.

—Death stung himself to death when he stung Christ.—*Romaine*.

—Has the day been full of care?
Have you had no time for prayer?
Not one chance a plea to send
Upward to thy Saviour Friend?

Ne'er did he forget to give
Strength and breath by which you live;
Yet you daily cannot spare
E'en an hour for earnest prayer!

—*Rena M. Hurd*.

—One thing, and only one, in this world has eternity stamped upon it. Feelings pass; opinions change. What you have done lasts.—*Robertson*.

—In the heart of every true believer there is a heavenly tendency, a divine attraction, which as sensibly draws him to converse with God as the loadstone attracts the needle.—*Whitefield*.

—Godliness consists not in a heart to intend to do the will of God, but in a heart to do it.—*Jonathan Edwards*.

—He that puts a Bible into the hands of a child gives him more than a kingdom, for he gives him a key to the kingdom of heaven.—*Buchanan*.

—A single grateful thought toward heaven is the most effective prayer.—*Lessing*.

—We may stand and knock at men's hearts till our own ache, but no opening till Christ come. He can fit a key to all the cross wards of the will, and with sweet efficacy open it, and that without any force or violence to it.—*Flavel*.

—O Son of God! thou hast conquered the world for me. Now conquer the world in me.—*Aitken*.

—The more we look at Jesus the more we see God the Father's love.

—The serene, silent beauty of a holy life is the most powerful influence in the world next to the almightiness of the Spirit of God.—*Spurgeon*.

—A man has two eyes; if he lose one, he can use the other. He has two hands; if he lose one, he can use the other. He has two feet; if he lose one, he can use the other. He has but *one soul*. If that is lost, what then?

—Polished steel will not shine in the dark; no more can reason, however refined or cultivated, shine efficaciously but as it reflects the light of divine truth shed from heaven.—*Foster*.

—God is a great God, and therefore he will be sought; he is a good God, and therefore he will be found.—*J. Mason*.

—Faith is the only bunch of hyssop that applies the blood of Christ to us and our spiritual sacrifices.—*Francis Roberts*.

—We are like little children strayed from home; and God is now fetching us home; but we are ready to turn into any house, stay and play with every thing in our way, and sit down on every green bank, and much ado there is to get us home.—*Baxter*.

The Teacher's Influence.

THERE is a wide difference between teaching and influence. They should go hand in hand, but do they always? We are character-builders. Architects we are, not of our own fortunes only, but of others' as well. In teaching and influencing we are helping to mold character, and to shape the life-course of individuals. It is a wonderful responsibility. Example must accompany and perfectly coincide with profession, or our work as teachers is in vain. None so soon pierce the faulty armor of insincerity as the bright-eyed boys and girls in our Sunday-schools. Some one has said, "Not what a man has, but what he *is*, settles the question of his power and his possibilities." It certainly does settle the question with a class of bright scholars. Under many an uncouth garment and harsh, repulsive exterior there may lie splendid possibilities awaiting development at our hands, even as in the skillful hands of Angelo the "Young David" appeared from that repulsive and disfigured block of marble. He saw therein what none other saw, and with tools of his own fashioning the master sculptor cut and chiseled, until there was unveiled the graceful form of a noble youth into which, as one has said, "Angelo has thrown more soul than one will find in the average man." This has a counterpart in many a life about us! We may be artists in character-building, having not only power to see beneath externals the figures of a noble man or woman, but we may have given us the skill, through kindly influence of words tempered with wisdom and by irreproachable example, to evolve from the inner life of some one about us a lovely character, and so turn a human life, it may be, from uselessness to grand account.—*Westminster Teacher*.

Book Notices.

Messianic Prophecy. By Prof. Charles Augustus Briggs, D.D., of the Union Theological Seminary. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. This stout octavo is a book for scholars and students, not for the general reader. Its theme is the greatest in the Old Testament, and it is handled by a master. The author undertakes to classify all the principal predictions concerning the Messiah in their chronological order, to show their precise meaning, and to present the development of the Messianic idea. Some of his conclusions, though familiar to scholars, will surprise the old-fashioned Bible-reader. He adopts the opinion that, just as the book of Psalms, though bearing David's name, is the work of many writers, so the book of Isaiah is of composite origin, and the last twenty-six chapters were written at the time of the exile. He makes no allusion to Jonah, probably because he does not look upon the book as Messianic. He is not certain as to the authenticity of the "stories" in the book of Daniel, but considers the book itself as true prophecy, written, however, at least three hundred years after the captivity. The prophecies in Zechariah, too, belong to several different epochs, hundreds of years apart. When opinions like these are avowed by a recognized leader in the conservative Presbyterian Church the tendencies of modern thought upon the Old Testament are clearly shown. Yet we are confident that the Bible student need not be alarmed, for the criticism will in the end only bring forth the truth.

The Crisis of Missions; or, The Voice Out of the Cloud. By Rev. Arthur T. Pierson, D.D. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers. The thirty-six chapters of this volume are packed full of facts and arguments and appeals in regard to the great missionary work. Every Sunday-school library ought to have a missionary department, and this is one of the books that should go into that department.

Foreign Facts and Fancies. Illustrated. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. Thirteen such brilliant writers as conspired to write this small book ought to be able to make it interesting. The reader is taken to England and the Continent of Europe, to Egypt and to South America, and has given to him a passing revelation of the wonders of mountains and valleys, of rivers and dales, of the open country and of populous cities. It is a delightful book to read in installments, every chapter being complete in itself.

Bible Warnings. Sermons to Children. By Rev. Richard Newton, D.D. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers. The venerable author of these sermons continues in his old age the practice begun in his youthful ministry, of preaching to the young. In success in this department he has few equals. The present series consists of fifteen sermons, treating of the various warnings given in the Bible. Preachers who wish to learn "how to talk to children" will do well to study these sermons.

Dorothy Delafield. By Mary Harriott Norris. New York: Phillips & Hunt. Cincinnati: Cranston & Stowe. We regard this as one of the best books of the season. In its penetration into character and its pictures of life it reminds us of George Eliot. The scene is laid mainly in a manufacturing village, which is drawn so clearly that one can see it as from the windows of the railroad train. Dorothy, the central figure, is a young lady of noble soul and earnest purpose. Incidentally the story touches upon labor

problems, woman's work, and a variety of social topics. We can remember just such a "donation party" as is described, and just such a country village, where the stage-driver and the dress-maker were the two most important functionaries in the community.

Topics and References in American History, with Numerous Search Questions. By Geo. A. Williams. Syracuse, N. Y.: C. W. Bardeen. A little book, but containing much valuable matter. It teaches American history in a series of close questions, for which the student is to find answers in books and magazines recommended at the close of each section. No better method of teaching history can be named.

Children's Stories of American Progress. By Henrietta Christian Wright. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. A handsome volume, in good type, bright cover, and illustrated with fine pictures; containing the story of the republic and its growth since the Revolution. Daniel Boone and his exploits, the journeys of Lewis and Clarke, Fulton's steamboat, and the early wars of the United States with the Barbary pirates, are among the narratives. The political history is likewise related, and the development of the great West is shown. This story-book ought to please the most fastidious of the children.

The Revelation of John Made Plain by an Explanation of the Law of Seven. By Louis Wepf. Cincinnati: Western Methodist Book Concern Press. The difficulties in the Book of Revelation have given it a peculiar fascination to many Bible students, so that more expositions have been written upon it than upon any other part of the Bible. The original feature of this commentary is that it presents the book as an anthem in four parts, treble, alto, tenor, and base; a conception which the author finds in the plan of the book, and which he regards as the solution of many of its mysteries. Like many other expositions, the work is more satisfactory in its explanation of the past than of the future.

Scriptures Hebrew and Christian, Arranged and Edited for Young Readers. By Professors Edward T. Bartlett and John P. Peters. Vol. I. Hebrew Story from the Creation to the Exile. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. This book fills a needed place in the library of every Bible student. It is a chronological arrangement of the Old Testament, in a free translation, which gives the best interpretation of the original. Not all the psalms and prophecies are inserted, but all the selections are placed in their historical framework. Thus the Old Testament is made to tell its own story and become its own expositor. It is especially adapted to young people, but will be found equally useful to older readers.

Anecdotes Illustrative of Old Testament Texts. New York: A. C. Armstrong & Sons. Though prepared for "The Clerical Library," this volume will be useful to many Sunday-school teachers: for an illustration aptly used will often arrest the attention of the class and aid in the teaching of the lesson. Most of the anecdotes in this collection have been gathered from original sources, and they are therefore the more fresh and valuable. This, with its companion volume on the New Testament, will be found a work of practical utility, though, after all, the best illustrations are drawn out of life and not out of books.

How to Strengthen the Memory; or, Natural and Scientific Methods of Never Forgetting. By M. L. Holbrook.

M.D. New York: M. L. Holbrook & Co. Dr. Holbrook discusses his subject in a very practical way. He does not aim to suddenly change a poor memory into a good one, but he lays down certain rules and principles which if faithfully followed cannot fail to improve a defective memory. There is also a brief but suggestive chapter on "The Art of Forgetting."

The Children of the Week. By W. T. Peters. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. A sumptuous presentation volume for the little folks, with creamy paper and rich engravings in photographic tint. The plan of the book is a trifle improbable, being that a Red Indian on a cent told to a little boy seven stories, which are herein set down. The stories are so well told that every child will be delighted, and we think that the older people will likewise listen. Books like this are in themselves an education in taste and art.

Silent Pete; or, The Stowaways. By James Otis. New York: Harper & Brothers. Another of the "Young People" series of square books. This is the story of two boys who voyaged from New Orleans to New York as "stowaways" on a brig. The characters are well drawn, and though in humble life they suggest noble lessons of fidelity and love. We commend this story to the young folks.

A Plain Man's Talk on the Labor Question. By Simon Newcomb, LL.D. New York: Harper & Brothers. A small book, but packed full of sound common sense. It would be well if a copy of this work could be put into the hands of every working-man in the country. It would set him thinking.

Castle Nowhere: Lake-Country Sketches. By Constance Fenimore Woolson. New York: Harper & Brothers. We have here a series of highly entertaining stories, which have appeared in several of our most popular magazines and are now gathered in more permanent form. They are worthy of it.

The Boys' Book of Famous Rulers. By Lydia Hoyt Farmer. New York: T. Y. Crowell & Co. This is a book which will delight and instruct boys, for it contains brief biographies, told in clear and interesting style, of fifteen of the world's greatest rulers, from Agamemnon to Napoleon. One book like this is worth twenty volumes of fiction. We hope it will have the large circulation which its merits deserve. The illuminated cover and the handsome pictures will attract notice, and the contents will repay reading.

All of Grace. By C. H. Spurgeon. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers. A little book, but containing earnest and strong words to those who desire to learn the way of salvation. Christian workers will find this a convenient pocket-manual for use in dealing with inquirers.

Ways and Means. By Margaret Vandegrift. Philadelphia: Porter & Coates. A pleasant story of a young lady who by the sudden inheritance of a fortune became possessor of means, and found ways to use it in doing good. The great lesson of the book is one which cannot be too often repeated—that money is a trust committed to our hands for the good of the world.

Uncle Titus. From the German of Johanna Spyri. By Lucy Wheelock. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. An orphan-girl, Dora, becomes the means of transforming two families: one that of Uncle Titus, a professor living among his books, and his wife, a worrying woman; the

other a noisy houseful of children next door. The story is quite interesting, and the translator's work is well done.

John Conscience of Kingsseal. By John M. Bamford. New York; Phillips & Hunt. Cincinnati: Cranston & Stowe. The author of "Elias Power" has given us another book in the same style. It combines something of a story with much earnest religion and sound sense in practical matters. This book presents some suggestions on the labor question which, if adopted, would go far to prevent strikes on one hand and grinding autocracy upon the other.

Harper's Young People. New York: Harper & Brothers. No more beautiful book for the boys and girls can be found than this, and none whose contents will afford greater enjoyment. It consists of the numbers of the weekly periodical for the year 1886, bound together into a large quarto volume. We are of opinion, however, that a work so large would double its usefulness, and preserve its shape better in the library, if it were bound in two volumes instead of one.

Babelle; or, Faithfulness. Will; or, Honesty. By the Author of the "Win and Wear Series." New York: Robert Carter & Brothers. The Gillette family are a very remarkable set of boys and girls. It is a pleasure to meet people of such courage and character, and we are sorry to part with them in these two books, the last of the series. These stories are admirably suited to the younger folk in the Sunday-school, and we hope that they will find a place in many libraries.

The Full Stature of a Man. By Julian Worth. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. There are some excellent qualities in this story. It aims to show how an aimless but able young man may grow noble by the friendship of a strong-hearted young woman, whom, after all, he does not marry. It is bright and striking in its style. But its author shows a great lack of information about churches when he places a preacher of an obscure sect in a Protestant Episcopal pulpit, and when in the vicinity of New York he uses the term "orthodox" to refer to a certain denomination.

The Harper's Handy Series (New York: Harper & Brothers) contains some books well worth reading, in a cheap and convenient form. We name as among the best of the recent issues: No. 66. *With the King at Oxford: A Tale of the Great Rebellion.* By Rev. Alfred J. Church, M.A. No. 67. *Sea-Life Sixty Years Ago: A Record of Adventures which Led up to the Discovery of the Relics of the Expedition of La Perouse.* By Captain George Bayly. No. 69. *The Choice of Books.* By Frederic Harrison. No. 71. *Goethe's Faust.* Translated from the German by John Anster, LL.D. No. 75. *French and German Socialism in Modern Times.* By Richard T. Ely, Ph.D. No. 83. *Alton Locke, Tailor and Poet.* By Charles Kingsley. No. 85. *The Open Air.* By Richard Jeffries. No. 86. *The Fall of Asgard.* By Julian Corbett. No. 99. *A Voyage to the Cape.* By W. Clark Russell.

Harper's Franklin Square Library (New York: Harper & Brothers) contains many reprints of English novels, with here and there a work of value. Among its recent works we find the following: No. 524. *England's Supremacy: Its Sources, Economics, and Dangers.* By J. S. Jeans. No. 540. *The Court of France in the Sixteenth Century.* By Catherine Charlotte, Lady Jackson. No. 543. *Ancient American Politics.* By Hugh J. Hastings. No. 545. *Autobiography of Leigh Hunt.*

CLASS RECORD FOR FEBRUARY, 1887.

	Feb. 6.	Feb. 13.	Feb. 20.	Feb. 27.
Weather				
Teacher.				
PUPILS.				

Whisper Songs for February.

SIXTH LESSON.

BROTHERS, sisters, all are we ;
Kind and generous may we be,
Choosing not our selfish ease,
Seeking first our Lord to please.

SEVENTH LESSON.

Worlds below and worlds above
Tell the story of his love ;
Yet he speaks—O, who will hear ?
“ I will keep thee ; never fear.”

EIGHTH LESSON.

Jesus hears his children pray,
He will never turn away
One who comes to seek his face,
Trusting in his truth and grace.

NINTH LESSON.

Haste to Jesus, little one,
Haste to Jesus, God's dear Son ;
For he waits with outstretched arm,
Waits to save his child from harm.

LESSONS FOR 1887.

First Quarter.

Jan. 2. THE BEGINNING.....	Gen. 1. 26-31, and 2. 1-3.
9. SIN AND DEATH.....	Gen. 3. 1-6, and 17-19.
16. CAIN AND ABEL.....	Gen. 4. 3-16.
23. NOAH AND THE ARK.....	Gen. 6. 9-22.
30. THE CALL OF ABRAHAM.....	Gen. 12. 1-9.

Feb. 6. Lot's Choice.....	Gen. 13. 1-13.
13. God's Covenant with Abram..	Gen. 15. 5-18.
20. Abraham Pleading for Sodom..	Gen. 18. 23-33.
27. Destruction of Sodom.....	Gen. 19. 15-26.
Mar. 6. ABRAHAM OFFERING ISAAC.....	Gen. 22. 1-14.
13. JACOB AT BETH-EL	Gen. 28. 10-22.
20. JACOB'S NEW NAME.....	Gen. 32. 9-12, and 24-30.
27. FIRST QUARTERLY REVIEW.	

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